THE Nation

VOLUME 144 NEW YORK • SATURDAY • JUNE 12, 1937 NUMBER 24

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The Shape of Things

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THE DOCTORS ARE FINALLY BREAKING DOWN the Chinese wall that has separated them from the world of social reality. As we go to press the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association, meeting at Atlantic City, is considering a resolution indorsing public medicine. "The health of the people," says the resolution, "is the direct concern of government." The resolution seems to have a good chance of adoption. If it goes through, it will amount almost to a revolution in the attitude of the medical profession. As such it must be hailed with delight by progressives. The action of the A. M. A. is not hard to interpret. It has been evident to all doctors except those with blinders that the present organization of medical economics cannot possibly continue. *Some* form of social medicine under *someone's* control is inevitable. The doctors are now moving to make sure that it is a form not too dangerous to competitive practice, and that they have the major hand in its control.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS AT LAST PUT HIS shoulder to the mired wheel of public housing. "Must legislation" is now called "preferred," but a housing bill is definitely on the list. Whatever the phrasing, Roosevelt can still make or break the Wagner-Steagall bill. Unfortunately he has raised trouble for himself and the public by referring the bill to the Treasury for approval or criticism. After weeks of delay Mr. Morgenthau has now proposed that it be drastically amended. He wants the government subsidy to be paid in one lump sum at the start of each project instead of being spread in small annual contributions over many years. On the billion-dollar program provided for in the Wagner bill this would require $600,000,000 in outright grants during the next three years, compared with the $47,250,000 which the present bill would call for. With economy the dominant mood of Congress, any such change in the bill would of course either kill it completely or drastically reduce the amount of housing that could be built. Mr. Morgenthau also wants the proposed Federal Housing Authority put in the Department of the Interior, where its control would be subject to change with each Presidential election, instead of given the independent status which the Wagner bill provides. On these crucial points no compromise is possible. Mr. Wagner is right and Mr. Morgenthau is wrong. We hope the President

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will make his own decision and promptly—in favor of the Wagner bill as drawn. This matter has been dragged out far too long already.

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UNTIL HE DIED GENERAL MOLA WAS THE "great strategist," the conqueror of Irun and San Sebastian. But now he will be remembered as the man who failed to take Madrid and Bilbao. When he was in direct command of the Madrid front his predictions that "we will be in the city tomorrow" never came off. Later, when he led the insurgent forces against Bilbao, the same boast steadily failed to materialize. In the report that he was killed by a time bomb set off inside the airplane in which he was traveling, there may be some truth. The fact that members of the ground crew at the rebel airport of Saragossa have been arrested for signaling to Loyalist airplanes and the report that there has been fighting among two factions of the Phalangists under Franco indicates the possibility of internal treason among the rebels. Meanwhile on the central front the Loyalists have recaptured several passes in the Guadarrama Mountains and crossed over into the plains beyond. This represents an important strategic advance as it allows them to take the offensive toward Segovia and Avila and diverts some of Franco's forces from Bilbao. At Valencia the Negrin government has been strengthened by the growing support of the U. G. T., the Socialist trade-union group whose allegiance had been problematical because of their loyalty to former Premier Caballero, and by the negotiations which the Anarchist C. N. T. has begun with a view to participation in the Cabinet.

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MORE THAN 8,000 BASQUE CHILDREN HAVE so far been transported to France from the burning suburbs of Bilbao and nearby villages under attack. Some 4,000 were sent to England, 500 to Belgium, a like number to Holland. Another 500 have just landed in Mexico, brought over at the expense of the Mexican government. The United States still dodges the obvious obligations of humanity and hospitality. Under pressure from the American Board of Guardians, established to cooperate in the task of saving their children, the Department of State, through Under Secretary Sumner Welles, expressed its profound sympathy for the young refugees and then pointed out the many technical obstacles in the way of admitting to the United States the 500 children for whom visitors' visas are being requested. Mr. Welles implied that the Secretary of Labor had discretion in determining the eligibility of the children and insisted that the consular authorities in Paris would consider their cases in "the most humane and generous way possible under the law." Meanwhile nothing happens; except that protests against admitting the children are pouring in on Washington from Catholic societies and individuals and newspapers. Apparently the church authorities would prefer to have Catholic children exposed to the bombs of Franco and his Nazi allies than to the possible Loyalist sympathies of their American would-be rescuers.

JEAN HARLOW'S DEATH CROWDED THE STRIKE and war news not only out of the press but out of the minds of most Americans as well. That was the final triumph of a career whose brief meteoric course has done more than most others to light up the nature of the American character. For it was not only that Jean Harlow was the glamor girl of the screen, desired and desirable, a symbol of the more blatant charms that a rather blatant people values. More important was the reckless, open honesty, the downright assertion of personality, that broke through all the roles she undertook. She was not a great actress, although she had more ability than the critics were at first willing to concede to her. But she was a person whom the movie audiences felt they understood. She rose from the ranks to the big money in the only remaining part of our national economy where the career open to talent still draws its fabulous rewards. Her life was like a chapter out of John Dos Passos.

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IN ENGLAND THE NATIONAL HARMONY which Mr. Baldwin so cunningly patched together for Mr. Chamberlain to inherit still holds the day—but only on the surface. While the princes of the church averted their eyes, the workingman's pastor performed the marriage ceremony for his one-time king and added the last unbelievable touch to the abdication drama which England is trying so desperately to pretend never happened. The new Premier got off to a bad start. All the plaudits given his speech (a gem of pure Baldwinese) announcing his withdrawal of the tax on excess profits cannot hide the fact that he has been roundly beaten on his first major measure and on his home grounds of the Exchequer. Protestations of fraternity and equality at the Empire conference cannot conceal the gap between the progressive dominions and Tory England, nor the unlikelihood of any agreement on tariff revision and on dominion contributions to English rearmament. In the labor field, while the bus strike has been ended and the threatened coal strike averted, the fundamental causes of conflict in both cases remain unsettled. And in dissolving its radical wing, the Socialist League, the Labor Party has won an empty triumph. For, within the party, members of the league will continue to fight for a more leftward orientation. But nowhere is the transparency of England's façade more apparent than in the newsreels of the coronation. They reveal a ceremony so artificial and hollow that all the publicity resources of a great empire could not pour life into it.

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WE QUOTE FROM THE MAGAZINE *TIME*, which is not generally credited with having a pro-labor bias, a paragraph commenting on Henry H. Bennett's version of the encounter between "loyal employees" of Ford and the organizers of the automobile workers. Mr. Bennett, Ford's public-relations counsel, said specifically that "no Ford service man or plant police were involved in any way in the fight. . . ." Herewith *Time's* comment:

> Unfortunately for Mr. Bennett's account as far as it concerned the beating of Organizer Frankensteen, there

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were too many witnesses. Newshawks reported recognizing Ford "service men" as the attackers, reported that these men had asked which were Frankensteen and Reuther. Also the Ford men were not quick enough to seize the plates of photographers. One group of camera men were chased in a car at 60 m.p.h. and took refuge in the Melvindale police station, where they were followed by three men who identified themselves as Ford service men. The pictures showed that Frankensteen and friends were given no amateur beating but a standard job of mauling including well-known gorilla tricks. One of the pictures disclosed a pair of handcuffs in the pocket of an attacker, and from the photographs it seemed likely that the Ford men would be identified. It looked very much as if that brutal beating might hurt Henry Ford as much as it hurt Richard Frankensteen.

Time, for once, has told.

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NAZIS AND CATHOLICS ARE NOW OPENLY at war in Germany. Eleven Catholic priests were arrested last week in Munich, and street fights have occurred. The Nazi radicals are in earnest. The theory of the totalitarian state demands complete control over the youth of the nation. That is the heart of the struggle. The religious orders will probably be liquidated after the immorality trials, and the Catholic statistics showing how trifling is the proportion of immoral priests to the total number will do little good. The more courageous priests will continue to be arrested and will languish for years in concentration camps. What Goebbels and Göring cannot brook is to have their sway over the minds of the young challenged by the Catholic youth organizations and the Catholic schools. They have however undertaken no easy task. The Catholic church is not like the Social-Democratic trade unions. It has a toughness of fiber; it feeds on martyrdom; it has survived persecutions before and emerged from them with greater strength. Meanwhile we cannot help asking, with President Frank Kingdon of Dana College, what the Catholics were doing when Hitler came to power. If they had then shown one-tenth of their present stubbornness, they would not now be called to martyrdom.

*

APPOINTMENT OF PRINCE FUMIMARO KONOE to succeed General Hayashi as Premier of Japan promises to give that country a more stable government than it has had at any time in the past six years. Because of his rank and background Konoe enjoys immense personal prestige with both the army and the civilian elements. As a ward and disciple of Prince Saionji, the elder statesman, he is known to be relatively progressive in his domestic policies. Although his "national union" Cabinet contains relatively few representatives from the dominant political parties, he is assured of support by practically all parliamentary groups. Ordinarily the elimination of political friction within Japan might be expected to contribute to happier conditions throughout the Far East. The selection of Hirota as Foreign Minister suggests, however, that this will not be the case. Hirota is closely associated with the extreme military clique; he was Foreign Minister and Premier during the period when Japanese policy was most irreconcilable toward China, and his appointment at this stage is interpreted within Japan as repudiation of Sato's relatively mild policies. Any danger that might exist in this tendency is largely offset, however, by China's increasing resistance. Tokyo is no longer the sole key to Far Eastern developments.

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THE BATTLESHIP ALWAYS SEEMS TO HAVE AN alibi; at least one is always offered for it by those who still believe in that antiquated type of fighting ship. Thus when the insurgent Spanish battleship Jaime I was bombed and disabled by loyalist airmen, it was asserted by "experts" in the British Admiralty and in Washington that that did not count because the ship was very old and lacked modern deck protection against air attack. Well, now we have the case of the Deutschland, the first of the German "pocket battleships," which caused such a sensation in the Allied navies when it was launched. This is a fairly modern battleship, yet it was successfully attacked, twenty-five of the crew being killed and eighty-one wounded. The German government officially stated that the loss of life occurred when the men were at a meal in "an unarmored part" of the ship. An unarmored part of an impregnable modern battleship? We did not know that there was such a thing. The defenders of these monsters have pointed out that the ship lay at anchor. Well, ships have to lie at anchor even in war time. To this they reply that the air attack was unexpected, as is shown by the crew's being at table. But the Spaniards assert that their airplanes were fired upon by the ship. Unfortunately the facts may never be clearly established; and so the battleship *per se* is again saved—for the moment. But the fact is undeniable that bombs hit the ship and penetrated its decks and did horrible damage. And still we Americans are going straight ahead laying down two more battleships to cost $50,000,000 each.

*

APPARENTLY ON THE BASIS OF TOM GIRDLER'S lawyer's account of what an assistant postmaster in Niles, Ohio, had said about two union officials not allowing "irregular" mail to be delivered to a Republic Steel plant, Dorothy Thompson went off on an outrage flight on June 7. We must even assume that she took off from a headline in the *Herald Tribune*—C. I. O. Censors the Mail—since the story beneath it contained an editorial summary of an Associated Press version that put a quite different light on the "C. I. O. censorship" which kept Miss Thompson in the air for a column and a half. (A subsequent story in the *Times* carried a denial by Bert Flaherty, although the facts are still somewhat obscured.) On the way up Miss Thompson cast off liberal ballast with a generous hand. She believes, she said, in industrial unionism, and even in the closed shop. But she soon ascended into the higher regions of "law and order." She accused the C. I. O. in general of interpreting the Wagner Act to mean the legalization of "any method whatsoever" for forcing recognition, and in

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particular of censoring the United States mails. She failed to mention Mr. Girdler's blatant defiance of the Wagner Act. She denounced the Post Office for "capitulating to force" and taking sides in a labor dispute—although the Post Office Department is following a thirty-year-old policy in maintaining only normal deliveries in troubled areas. It is refusing to allow food to be sent by mail into the Republic plants just as it refused to accept such packages for delivery to sit-in strikers in Flint. Perhaps the high point in Miss Thompson's flight was reached at the end of a passage deploring the arming of policemen and the tendency of strikers to carry weapons of their own. "We shall never be able to disarm the police," she wrote, "until the moment when a man who spits in the face of a policeman goes to jail for it." Like Miss Thompson we deplore violence, though at this point Girdler's violence seems to us more menacing than union violence. We even think it might be a good idea if the man who spits in a policeman's face were sent to jail—at once, that is, instead of being routed through a hospital by a blow over the head or a shot in the back.

✶

J. P. MORGAN HAS ADDED ANOTHER NUGGET to our understanding of government and law. "If the government doesn't know enough to collect taxes, a man's a fool to pay them," he blurted out red-faced to the ship reporters. The budgetary problem becomes thus a battle of wits between the community and the rich individual, with the latter always winning because law-drafting cannot possibly keep pace with the ingenuity of the legal mind for law-evasion. Mr. Morgan should be reminded that he has expressed exactly the social philosophy we have always associated with the big racketeers.

Tom Girdler's Defiance

"LITTLE STEEL," under the leadership of a glorified company cop named Tom Girdler, has enlisted every form of violence and trickery to break the C. I. O. and if possible undercut Big Steel. United States Steel, acting on good advice, signed a contract with the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee; Girdler sticks to his guns, and with the help of the police he has so far brought about the death of seven people and the wounding of a hundred others in the Battle of Chicago. With the further help of Chicago's rabid press, he and his allies are now cultivating the fiction that an "inflamed mob" "attacked the police," that the "riot" was incited by outside agitators, that the strikers carried firearms, that the police were fighting for their lives, and that their beloved workers would go right back to their jobs if it were not for the "military blockade" maintained by the union.

Against this account, which follows a discredited formula, stand a few incontrovertible facts. (1) Not one of the policemen injured in the battle was shot; but the great majority of the strikers and sympathizers who were killed or hurt were struck by bullets and many of them were shot from behind. (2) The crowd was at least one and a half blocks away from company property. "Frank A. Lauerman, superintendent of public relations for the Republic Company," said the New York *Times* of May 31, "announced that the company planned to make no statement because the riot did not occur at the plant or on company property." (3) The dead, some of whom were labeled outside agitators because they could not be identified immediately, turned out to be natives of the area affected by the strike, and with one exception steel workers. (4) The photographs printed in the newspapers, as well as numerous eyewitness accounts, including that of Meyer Levin which we print on another page of this issue, give overwhelming evidence that the police attacked —and followed up the attack with wanton brutality. And Paramount News would hardly have "shelved" its reels of the incident for fear of inciting "riotous demonstrations in theaters" if they had shown strikers beating up police.

So far the tactics of Republic Steel have not decreased the effectiveness of the strike in which 70,000 workers in seven states are involved. It seems unlikely, however, that the struggle will be fought out on the picket line. The company has met Mayor Kelly's order to cease feeding and housing workers in its plants by moving them into the unwonted luxury of Pullman cars. We wish them pleasant dreams about the Pullman strike. Five railroads in the area, backing Republic, are asking state and federal officials and the courts to break up the union's "blockade" of steel shipments. In Washington at this writing a hands-off policy prevails. There is said to be no evidence to warrant intervention in behalf of the railroads, and the Post Office is so far considered safe from union censorship. The strikers' plea for Presidential mediation has been referred to the board, which says, however, that as yet no formal action has been instituted before it.

The union may be expected to institute such action shortly, for Mr. Girdler and his defiance offer a magnificent opportunity to the Department of Justice and the National Labor Relations Board of an Administration committed, verbally at least, to a peaceful equalization of political and economic power. Girdler represents everything in the way of ruthlessness and disregard of law that the New Deal has said it would not stand for. He admits having arms in his factories. He makes a blatant exhibition of his refusal to sign a union contract even if the union has a majority of its workers. He is fostering company unions in the form of "back-to-work" movements, and raising up vigilante squads. He has violated, probably, the Byrnes Act against the importation of strike-breakers. Philip Murray of the union charges that he has entered into an "unholy alliance" with other steel companies to prevent the enforcement of the Wagner Act.

The penalty for conspiring to evade a federal statute—as Miss Stein points out—is a $10,000 fine, two years' imprisonment, or both. The charge against Girdler should be investigated. If it proves true, we should be willing to spare Tom Girdler the fine, which he can best afford. To put him in jail for two years would greatly improve industrial relations.

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The Drift to War

THE crisis which followed the shelling of Almeria has passed, like many preceding it, without plunging Europe into war. This would be cause for gratification if the concessions granted to preserve peace did not make more serious incidents inevitable. Hitler has shown the world, and the German people in particular, that he can order the bombardment of a foreign city in defiance of the League, of the Pact of Paris, and of all principles of humanity without rebuke from the democratic powers. Instead of summoning the Reich before the World Court or taking measures to check the assistance which it is giving the Spanish rebels, Britain and France have sought to conciliate the fascist powers with promises of "safety zones" and possible joint action against the Spanish government in the event of future attacks on German ships.

These tactics have been successful in averting an immediate war. But they have immeasurably strengthened the hands of the warmakers, and thereby increased the probability of an ultimate conflict. A glance at the succession of incidents by which Hitler has built up the prestige of his regime is sufficient to confirm this. Repudiation of external debts, the introduction of conscription, the remilitarization of the Rhineland, and withdrawal from the League involved no direct infringement of the sovereignty of a foreign nation. The shelling of Almeria was the first open attack on the territory of another country; yet Hitler got away with it even more easily than with some of his earlier coups. This cannot go on indefinitely. Encouraged by the passivity of the democratic states, Hitler or Mussolini is certain on some occasion to misjudge the extent to which the powers will retreat.

The capitulation of the democracies on the Almeria incident can only hasten this ultimate showdown. This was much more apparent during the days immediately succeeding the crisis than now. Italy and Germany both withdrew from the Non-Intervention Committee. Reports arrived of the landing of large numbers of German and Italian troops at San Sebastian. Mussolini announced that he would do his utmost to prevent all supplies from reaching the Spanish government. But now, temporarily at least, the atmosphere has cleared. The Italian Foreign Minister has accepted all but one of the British proposals for a new non-intervention agreement and Germany has taken a similar stand. They have agreed that both Spanish belligerents must give assurance of respect for the patrol ships and that safety zones shall be established at stated ports on both sides. But they refuse to accept the third point, which provides that the powers on patrol duty shall consult one another before taking any measures of reprisal. The British believe that this difference can be ironed out by the end of the week and the recreant nations once more safely assembled under the respectable cloak of non-intervention.

But the real menace remains. For beneath all the diplomatic wire-pulling evidence is piling up that Germany and Italy are determined to carry the Spanish rebels through to victory. The only consideration that may move Hitler from this policy is the possibility of purchasing a promise from England that it will give him a free hand in Eastern Europe. For this he would undoubtedly be willing to pay a considerable price, even to the extent of withdrawing his troops from Spain and abandoning the Berlin-Rome-Burgos axis. For there is no more reason to believe that Hitler is playing fair with Mussolini than there is to believe he would play fair with anyone else. His foreign policy is *Machtpolitik,* and the visit of Blomberg to Rome may well be regarded as a species of political blackmail—a threat held over England, which has reason to fear a German-Italian combination. But it would be folly for England to respond. Its only feasible course, even for the safety of its own empire, is to check fascist aggression all along the world front. Whether a Tory government will have the clarity to see that is quite another question.

Washington Is a Battlefield

WASHINGTON today is a battlefield, with four major engagements going on simultaneously. The court-reorganization struggle is far from settled, although for the moment it is dormant. The adjournment of the Supreme Court without final disposal of matters so far-reaching as the powers of the Securities Exchange Commission or the status of PWA loans to municipalities for power plants was a blunder of judicial strategy that must be chalked up against Chief Justice Hughes. The failure of the courts to keep up with their schedules and the way they have acted as a drag upon the Congressional program could not have been better illustrated than in these two instances, both involving crucial parts of the Roosevelt attempt to regulate the structure of capitalist power. When a new justice is appointed to fill Van Devanter's place, the cases will have to be reargued, and that means considerable delay.

The second battle is on utilities and it is closely related to the court struggle. One of the court's acts before adjournment was a refusal to grant the government's request that a power-company suit to restrain the TVA from going on with its operations be handled by the Supreme Court instead of being sent back to the Tennessee District Court. This means, in effect, that the valiant efforts of the TVA to untangle the legal snags that have tied up its operations for so long are once more doomed. President Roosevelt's message to Congress last week asking for the setting up of seven regional power agencies modeled on the TVA will therefore be no more effective than the courts allow it to be. Already the Committee of Utility Executives has launched several broadsides against the message and against the bills introduced by Senator Norris and Representative Mansfield to incorporate it in legislation. There can be no doubt that things are shaping up

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to a sharp struggle; but even if the Administration succeeds in getting a bill through, we may count on the lower federal courts to tangle it up for several years more while the country waits for concrete results.

The other two battles are on the wages-and-hours bill and the income-tax evasions. We shall hear a good deal in the coming weeks about the "fascist" character of the Black-Connery bill, about its attempts to regiment industry and place dictatorial power in the hands of five men. Undoubtedly a bill providing for a looser organization would be attacked for its looseness, as too vague a delegation of power by Congress. The fact is that the Republicans and the tory Democrats do not want a federal wages-and-hours bill of any kind. And they will fight to the death whatever bill is offered. As for the attempt to plug up loopholes in tax administration, as Earnest K. Lindley points out in his article in this issue, that is a program to which many in high places even within the Democratic Party will be sensitive. There is nothing surprising about the measure. It was long overdue, and any Administration that has the least spark of budgetary conscience would have to proceed vigorously against tax-dodgers in the upper brackets and their high-powered legal lieutenants. Here, where nothing can be said with any grace against the *matter* of the Administration's action, the cry will be raised against its *manner;* and Walter Lippmann's protest against "government by indignation" will gladden the hearts of the big-income group, which up to now has believed it had a monopoly of indignation.

The Nation has never been a Roosevelt partisan or swallowed the whole of the President's program. We think his court plan has been badly managed and should have been more thoroughgoing. We believe he might have been firmer in handling TVA policy. We have our fingers crossed as to whether the tax-evasion drive will be an isolated incident or part of a sustained policy of tax reform. We should have liked a more generous stand on relief appropriations. And we are still waiting to see what will happen on slum clearance and farm tenancy.

But one thing is certain. Mr. Roosevelt is today fighting a valiant battle for progressive legislation. He has no substantial support even within his own party; his real support and strength lie in the forces of labor. And he is fighting almost single-handed against a united front of reactionaries in both parties and a group of "liberals" who are reactionary in everything but name. He beat them in the election; they are now trying to wrest the fruits of that victory from him and the people by more devious and subtle methods than were possible in the campaign. Time and again in American history we have had reform Presidents who have flashed for a brief instant in the political heavens and then flickered out. Mr. Roosevelt, whatever else may be said of him, is not one of those. And that is why the big-income groups and their spokesmen cannot forgive him. That is why they hate him. He has violated the rules of the game of politics in a capitalist state: he has insisted upon progressive reform even after his second election, when it is no longer necessary as a political gesture.

"The Nation" Is Sold

WE PRINT herewith a statement from Maurice Wertheim announcing the sale of *The Nation* to one of its editors, Freda Kirchwey.

After some eleven years of connection with *The Nation* as a member of its Board of Directors I arranged its purchase from Oswald Garrison Villard in 1935 for the Civic Aid Foundation, a non-profit organization which I established and control. The paper was then in financial difficulties, and my object in purchasing it was to insure the future of this long-established and valuable organ of liberalism.

Since I had not the time to become the active publisher of *The Nation* but nevertheless desired to maintain its traditional independence, the Civic Aid Foundation turned over to the Board of Editors of *The Nation* on October 27 last complete control of its editorial policy. The circulation of the paper is now at its peak for all time, and I have nothing but praise for the devotion and work of its two older editors, Freda Kirchwey and Joseph Wood Krutch, as well as for its newer one, Max Lerner, who has contributed notably to this result. My thanks are also due to its business manager, Hugo Van Arx, for his unremitting and successful efforts in his field, and to the staff.

Of late, however, it has become increasingly clear that group control is not effective and that absentee ownership creates an anomalous situation. On occasions the editors have differed from the editorial associates, Oswald Garrison Villard, Alvin Johnson, and Heywood Broun, and I have often differed from views expressed in the paper. Typical of this was *The Nation* policy on the Supreme Court issue, on which both Mr. Villard and I felt constrained to write articles for *The Nation* differing from its stand thereon. Under the circumstances I have concluded that the best interests of the paper and its growing circle of readers would be served if centralized control by an active hand could be secured.

As the paper is now on a self-supporting basis, there have been many would-be purchasers. I believe, however, that its independent character and direction can best be preserved by placing control in the hands of its senior editor, Freda Kirchwey, who has had sixteen years of active association with it and who is, in my opinion, one of the truest liberals in the country.

I therefore offered her the first opportunity to purchase *The Nation,* and it is now my great pleasure to announce that on my recommendation the Civic Aid Foundation has today entered into a contract for the sale of the paper to her. MAURICE WERTHEIM

The change of ownership takes place under promising auspices. Building on the solid foundation laid down in the last two years, *The Nation,* for the first time in its history, can confidently hope to continue to be self-supporting. The demand for an independent, vigorously liberal interpretation of events is greater than ever before. We welcome the opportunity to meet it and to go forward under our own power. The future is on the side of the independent battalions.

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Tax-Dodgers on Parade

BY ERNEST K. LINDLEY

Washington, June 6

IF UNSEEN hands—of which many are frantically at work—can be prevented from applying the brakes, the Congressional investigation of tax avoidance and evasion should be the most interesting revelation of financial ethics and legal ingenuity in the upper brackets since the close of Ferdinand Pecora's Wall Street investigation. The potentialities of the inquiry are indicated by the denunciation that has been heaped upon it.

It is true that the parading of some rich tax-dodgers and their lawyers may be politically useful to Mr. Roosevelt. He has always been able to tighten up his loose coalition of supporters when he has been successful in focusing attention on the iniquities of the rich. He needs a unifying agent now. However, he has not had much luck politically with tax issues. His "soak-the-rich" tax program in the summer of 1935 exasperated Congress, and he made no political capital whatever of the undistributed-earnings tax in 1936. The attempt to prosecute Andrew Mellon was a boomerang. In the present instance the idea originated with the Treasury, not among the politicians in the Administration. And the Treasury wants it for extremely practical purposes.

The Treasury is hopeful that the investigation will whip up a great deal of indignation. This it wants to use for four purposes: first, to push remedial legislation through Congress; second, to stiffen the Department of Justice; third, to impress the courts; and, fourth, to hold within reasonable limits tax avoidance by devices which lawyers can contrive more rapidly than the law can be amended to stop them or which cannot be reached by statute without injustice to taxpayers who use the same devices for legitimate purposes.

Undoubtedly the view is widely held that a tax-dodging scheme is either legal, and therefore ethical, or against the law, and therefore within reach of the Treasury. The President's message anticipated the argument that if there are loopholes the Administration should persuade Congress to amend the law and not crucify taxpayers publicly for availing themselves of their privileges. One of the purposes of the investigation is to reveal that the facts are not so simple. Mr. Lippmann, for example, appears to think that the deduction claimed by a rich man for losses in operating his chicken farm is a "fake" loss which the Treasury can disallow. So it may seem at first glance to the ordinary citizen, and so it was contended by the Bureau of Internal Revenue until the federal courts decided to the contrary. By court decision a wealthy industrialist who owns a farm is a farmer, and he is none the less a farmer if he loses large quantities of money on his farm year after year. How do you propose to define by law whether a man is a farmer or is only gratifying a hobby? Or take one of the greatest sources of losses to the Treasury—the distribution of ownership within a family of property accumulated and managed by one member. In one instance dug up by the Treasury the head of the family distributed his property through as many as sixty-four trusts with a saving of $485,000 in taxes in one year. Congress is not likely to consider with favor such a fundamental violation of the rights of property as preventing the head of a family from distributing his holdings as he wishes among the members of his family. In the Treasury's view, the ideal would be to have all the income within a family taxed as the income of one individual.

For three years the Treasury has been narrowing and closing loopholes by regulations and with the aid of legislation. It wants more legislation. But there will always be a great volume of marginal cases difficult or impossible to cover by statute—more under corporation taxes than under individual income taxes. The volume of tax litigation is enormous. Perhaps a quarter of the cases that come before the Supreme Court are tax cases, and no small number of them are federal income-tax cases. And since property rights are involved, the tendency of the courts has been to favor the taxpayer.

The number of civil and criminal suits growing out of returns on 1936 incomes promises to be unprecedentedly high. The combination of higher taxes and higher incomes has given powerful incentives to try every new-fangled tax-dodging scheme that the lawyers can cook up. The taxpayer may expect to face a fight in the courts, but even an outside chance at victory is worth taking. In the case of the Bahamas Insurance Company cited by Secretary Morgenthau, the Treasury, once it had discovered the contrivance, convinced the taxpayers that they were in danger of being prosecuted for fraud and they offered a full settlement plus interest. The Treasury would like to spur the Department of Justice into criminal prosecutions of some of its most notable examples of tax-dodging by supposedly respectable people, but it counts on publicity through the Congressional investigation to act as a check. In short, it hopes to make tax-dodging unpopular, even among big taxpayers.

The strongest pressure to smother the investigation or keep it under strict control is coming from lawyers with Democratic political affiliations. A big part of the tax business always goes to the lawyers of the party in power. An extremely influential political leader is reported to be the lawyer who has done the biggest business in creating Bahamas corporations. Treasury officials appear to be eager to blow off the lid with complete political impartiality. Whether the joint Congressional investigating committee will be so undiscriminating cannot be predicted until its membership has been announced.

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Republic Sticks to Its Guns

BY ROSE M. STEIN

Youngstown, Ohio, June 4

THE Youngstown-Cleveland-Chicago strike, involving some 70,000 steel workers employed by three corporations, centers largely around one individual. That individual is Tom Girdler, president and board chairman of the Republic Steel Corporation, and recently elected president of the Iron and Steel Institute. It is an open secret that the other two companies, Inland Steel and Youngstown Sheet and Tube, especially the latter, might have been persuaded to sign a union contract similar to the one signed by the various United States Steel subsidiaries had it not been for Tom Girdler.

By temperament, experience, and resolution Tom Girdler is an arch enemy of unionism. He was born and raised on a Kentucky farm, worked his way through college, and upon graduation entered a steel mill. This was back in 1902, when unionism in steel was being smashed right and left. He held minor supervisory positions with the Atlanta Steel Company and the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, in both of which he observed the hard-boiled tactics of the steel barons and even improved upon them. In 1914 he became assistant superintendent of Jones and Laughlin's Aliquippa plant, where he remained for fourteen years and where he personally set up and supervised a reign of terror under which the workers were held in a state of virtual serfdom. In recognition of this achievement he was elected president of the company in 1928. When in 1929 the Cyrus Eaton and Mather interests consolidated a number of concerns with the old Republic Iron and Steel, forming the present Republic Steel Corporation, it was found that an iron hand was needed to weld together the various discordant elements, and Tom Girdler was hired to do the job. This phenomenal rise from poor farm boy to steel-company president has made him arrogant and disdainful of those below him in the economic scale. Workers are to Tom Girdler just inferior beings who do not know how to forge ahead. To allow them equal bargaining power with himself, head of the third largest steel producer in the country, strikes him as a preposterous idea. Even more preposterous, downright painful, is the very thought of having to bargain with outsiders.

Girdler was determined from the very beginning to give the C. I. O. a good fight. He is mortally afraid of a nation-wide union, thoroughly dislikes John L. Lewis, is more than a little jealous of Lewis's potential power, and hoped to clip that power by mobilizing a solid steel front against him. He was profoundly grieved by the desertion of two-thirds of the steel producers, who found it expedient to sign union contracts, but he is determined to go ahead with the fight single-handed if need be. Those close to him claim that he is quite obsessed with the idea of enacting in 1937 the role played in 1919 by Judge Gary. His tactics are of the Gary school—based on thugs and bullets. The union has positive proof that Girdler's agents are busy recruiting more thugs, and that they are ordering additional supplies of arms and tear gas from Federal Laboratories in Pittsburgh.

The first result of this policy was the Decoration Day riot in Chicago. Tom Girdler cannot escape responsibility for the attack and massacre of May 30 in which seven were killed and one hundred wounded. It would probably be naive to expect Chicago's corrupt political machine to institute a thorough investigation of the riot, but such an investigation might uncover some alarming facts. Union officials claim to know and to be able to prove that the 1,500 marchers who paraded in the direction of Republic's plant were armed with nothing more than American flags; that they neither intended nor anticipated trouble as attested by the fact that many of the marchers were women and children—one of the wounded was a lad of eight; that they were several blocks away from Republic property when the attack was made; that the marchers carried no firearms, proved by the fact that not a single one of the twenty-two policemen injured suffered from gun shots; and finally, and most significant, that the regular police officers used tear gas while those among the officers who used firearms were company-hired thugs dressed in police uniforms.

Plants of the Inland Steel Corporation and the Youngstown Sheet and Tube are entirely closed. That was agreed upon in advance. Republic alone is willing to assume the cost and risk of keeping some of its mills in operation. Out of a total of some 25,000 men employed in plants within the greater Youngstown area, which includes also Canton, Warren, and Niles, the highest estimate of those at work is 2,000. Approximately 1,000 more are at work in Chicago. This force is concentrated in the Warren, Niles, and Chicago plants, and in order to maintain it the company went to the trouble and expense of providing commissaries, sleeping quarters, and airplanes to carry food supplies. Spokesmen for the corporation are rather vague about the rate of pay the barricaded workmen are receiving. In 1933, when the Carnegie Steel Corporation, in the course of a brief strike, kept a crew inside its Clairton plant, the men were paid for twenty-four hours a day, although they worked only eight-hour shifts. It is hardly likely that Republic is able to buy its "scab" or "loyal" labor more cheaply.

The issue involved in the strike is very simple. The Steel Workers' Organizing Committee is demanding that the three companies sign a contract similar to the one signed by some 150 other steel producers, a contract, that is, which accepts the C. I. O. union as the bargaining

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agency for its own members. The union cannot retreat from this position without compromising its entire structure. The only alternative it can offer is that the issue be decided by a government-supervised election. To this proposal Republic Steel's reply, before the strike as well as now, is "Go ahead and hold your election. Get even 95 per cent of the votes; we still will not sign a contract." Under the circumstances gubernatorial intervention of the kind used in the automobile strike would be futile, assuming that Governors Davey and Horner could be enlisted to play the Murphy role. The primary need here is to convince Youngstown Sheet and Tube and Inland Steel that they are parties to the Girdler conspiracy, and to induce them to desert what Phil Murray calls "the unholy alliance." Left to paddle his own canoe, Tom Girdler might find the waters altogether too turbulent.

Such pressure would be decidedly in the interest of the general welfare, and the agencies naturally equipped to apply it are the National Labor Relations Board and the Department of Justice; the one because the Labor Relations Act is being violated, the other because the alliance comes definitely under the category of conspiracy.

In the course of negotiations prior to the strike, the Sheet and Tube Company was not altogether hostile to the union. At one time its representatives said they would be willing to sign a contract if the other independents could be induced to do likewise. Later they retreated from this position, telling three officials of the S. W. O. C. that they would accept the regular contract form in toto and abide by every one of its provisions, but not sign it. According to a decision handed down by the National Labor Relations Board on July 7, 1936, in the case of a St. Joseph, Missouri, stockyard firm, such refusal constitutes an unfair labor practice within the meaning of Section 8 of the National Labor Relations Act. The board ruled that while an employer is not compelled to sign an agreement presented to him by representatives of his employees, where there has been a definite "meeting of minds" and "an understanding reached," such understanding should be incorporated in "a binding agreement," and refusal to do so is a violation of the law. This decision is directly applicable to the Youngstown Sheet and Tube case, where a "meeting of minds" took place, and the board should proceed at once to enforce it.

The Department of Justice, on the other hand, should carefully look into the activities of Republic Steel. There can be little doubt that Tom Girdler conspired, is now conspiring, and is enlisting others to conspire with him, to evade both the letter and the spirit of the National Labor Relations Act. The penalty for conspiring to evade a federal statute, as provided by the Act of May 17, 1879, is $10,000 fine, two years' imprisonment, or both.

Unless drastic action is taken, and the strike is promptly settled, there is every chance that there will be more violence and bloodshed, this time probably in the Youngstown area. The strikers are tense and jumpy, while the companies, especially Republic Steel, are doing everything possible to fan this tenseness into flames. An office has been opened in a downtown Youngstown bank building to sign up people who want to go back to work. Straw bosses and their wives are rounding up signatories, especially among the colored employees. Wives whose husbands are on the picket line are being offered $8 and $10 a day to help with the back-to-work movement. Company-union adherents are being deputized by the sheriff to maintain law and order. Stooges are busy circulating wild rumors about sabotage, and about desertion from union ranks. Whites are being aroused against Negroes, Americans against foreigners.

There is a sharp contrast between this atmosphere of impending trouble and the atmosphere of liberation and good feeling which prevails in the steel towns along the Monongahela, Allegheny, and Ohio rivers, where union contractual relations exist. In Homestead, where less than four years ago a member of the President's Cabinet could not find a meeting place, workers were debating at a meeting the other evening a proposed sitdown strike in one of the Carnegie-Illinois mills because the roller in one of the departments had not yet joined the union. "That is not a legitimate grievance for us to take up with management," argued the chairman, "because our contract does not provide for the closed shop but entitles us only to bargain for our members." The men conceded the truth of the argument, "but," they added, "we can't do our work right with a scab in our midst."

Braddock, Rankin, Duquesne, Clairton, McKeesport, to mention only a few steel towns, are working steadily and peacefully. The men are building their union, improving their bargaining machinery, setting up workers' education programs, and in some instances are nominating men from their own ranks for municipal offices in the coming election. In Aliquippa the union celebrated the signing of an exclusive bargaining contract on Decoration Day. One of the workers writes as follows.

> We had the full cooperation of the local authorities in putting on the parade and mass meeting. We were given a permit for the parade and a motorcycle cop to lead us. All traffic was stopped while we marched. And afterwards the Aliquippa *Gazette* gave us a good news write-up. And of course we had a good turn-out; four or five thousand, . . .

The first grievance under the Jones and Laughlin contract arose out of a scuffle between two Negro workers. One of them came into the mill with a company-union button. "Don't you know the C. I. O. got exclusive bargaining?" asked the union man and unceremoniously tore it off. The foreman was about to lay off the union man when the entire department stopped work. The grievance was promptly settled by laying off both men for three days, only the union man got paid for one of those days. "My man," gloated the union adherent, "this is first time J and L pay me for doing nothing. C. I. O. sure is wonderful."

Peace, confidence, a holiday mood in one section; tenseness, fear, and murder in another. Between the two stand three stubborn companies, led by one stubborn individual, who very much prefers his $150,000 a year job to digging potatoes, and who is defending that job, and his anti-union policies, by means closely resembling those employed by Adolf Hitler and Francisco Franco.

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Slaughter in Chicago

BY MEYER LEVIN

FIELD headquarters of the Republic Company steel strikers is a vacant one-time roadhouse known as Sam's Place, Dine and Dance. A long windowless room, backed by a kitchen now used to feed strikers; a side room containing a long bar on which soup, beans, and coffee are now served. The building looks toward the open prairie; four blocks away is a little street of shabby houses facing the Republic steel plant. Two automobile roads cross the prairie to that street. The police have closed the roads.

It is a fine, a perfect day. The yard outside Sam's Place is filled with shirt-sleeved men; a large number are spruced up for Memorial Day and have brought their wives and children. From the back of a truck speeches are made; again and again speakers point out that throughout the country the right to picket is no longer questioned. But this is Chicago.

A motion is made to picket peacefully outside the plant. It is carried unanimously. The line forms with two American flags at the head. It is a mixed crowd; mostly it has a kidding, holiday air. Scattered through it or walking alongside are scores of sympathizers and many merely curious citizens who have read about the picketing ban and have come out to see if it will be enforced. I recognize many university people. A kid eating a popsicle tags along with his father.

I look for weapons. Only a few days ago strikers had their heads smashed by clubs. Ahead of them now the marchers can clearly see hundreds of police spread out in a warlike front. Several of the strikers carry placards tacked to sticks that might be used as clubs. One carries a baseball bat. As we walk across the prairie, a few pick up stones, but they are admonished to drop them.

Walking through the high prairie grass three blocks to the police line, the people tend to scatter and the long column is broken. The leaders halt, and call for everybody to fall back into line. The march—it is really a walk—is resumed. There is a scattered singing of "Solidarity." Presently the front rank halts, face to face with the police. The leaders explain that their followers wish to exercise their constitutional rights, only yesterday guaranteed by the mayor, to picket peacefully.

"I'm only a cop, talk to the captain."

There are at least two police captains present, Mooney and Kilroy, but they do not come forward to speak to the strikers. Several moments pass while the boys in the front rank try to find the authorities. Meanwhile, strung back across the prairie, the procession quietly waits.

I work my way to the left of the line and come up closer to the police. I see several policemen with their hands on their revolvers. Behind the double line of police are patrol wagons and newsreel trucks. I can see a mass of men standing on a pile of material in the yard of the plant; these are scabs and company guards watching the show. The company had promised them a ball game for Sunday afternoon. A police captain walks to my end of the line, within six feet of me, and says in a conversational voice, "I warn you in the name of the law to disperse." Perhaps twenty people around me can hear him. Over a thousand are behind us.

What followed happened so fast that it is impossible for me to state, absolutely, the time order. It appeared to me that the police line concertedly advanced swinging clubs, that at the same moment a rock flew high through the air, over the police line, aimed at the yard of the plant. "The usual incident." The phrase flashed through my mind; and at the same moment I heard firing. A cloud of tear gas rolled like an immense pillow on the ground. I believed that the police were merely firing tear-gas cartridges. Instantly everyone turned and ran.

There was no firing at any time by the strikers. No policeman was shot, though the police accuse the strikers of firing. There was no "battle." The people fled. As I ran I turned and saw the police charging after us.

Meanwhile the shooting continued with the rapidity but not the rhythm of machine-gun fire. I still could not believe that the police were shooting bullets, since there had been absolutely no warning or provocation, and since it was apparent that the tear gas was sufficient to disperse the procession. A man came stumbling toward me holding his hands over his eyes. A woman ran by, her face distorted in pain, crying, "They gassed me." I attempted to guide the blinded man. "Don't worry, the effect will pass," I said, but he mumbled incoherently, "They shot me." I thought he was hysterical; a day later I read that a man had had both eyes shot out.

My mind still rejected the evidence of my senses. A man in a blue shirt dove into the grass in front of me. I thought, "He's scared they're going to fire, he's seen too many movies of soldiers lying prone, letting the bullets pass over them." Only later the peculiar flatness in the way he pitched forward remained in visual memory, and I thought, "Why, that fellow fell shot."

Starting to run again I head a boy cry, "Pa, I'm shot." It was a kid of about ten. He was hopping, his left leg raised. His father, a stubby man, picked him up and ran on. I was just in front of them. Presently the man was exhausted. I took the boy from him. Cars, hastily volunteered, were already driving across the prairie and picking up the wounded. Two cars passed me, only in the third was there room for the child.

He was so utterly quiet while I carried him that I thought maybe he hadn't really been shot, maybe he was imagining. The firing continued all this time, yet

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even though I had seen cars full of wounded, I did not believe it could be gun fire; the atrocity was so swift, so overwhelming, that my mind could not accept it.

At strike headquarters the long, dark room was already crowded. Several men lay on the floor bleeding. One was on his side; his shirt and pants were torn, revealing expanses of skin covered with dark splotches. There were a few coats, a few chairs. On each cot there were two or three with bullet wounds; wounded on all the chairs. A tiny yellow kitten stepped carefully around puddles, daintily licking blood.

The room was strangely quiet; people talked in hushed tones. The mother of the boy I had carried had found him and was cursing endlessly in a low tone. A woman held up a bleeding hand and said, "I'm lucky, I'm lucky, the cop chased me, shooting all the time, and he just hit my hand." . . . I saw a man with a wound, a small red hole directly in the center of the abdomen. It was just a red spot and did not look serious. The next day I knew that abdominal wounds are almost always fatal. . . . Several university girls, spectators, were rushing frantically among the wounded applying first aid. Three physicians had appeared from among the crowd, but they were not equipped for a massacre.

We started mobilizing cars, rushing people to hospitals. I helped carry several men out to cars. My hands were sticky with blood. "First Aid" had been scribbled on signs stuck on cars. A driver pulled up with a car full of wounded. "I had one more," he said with contained fury. "His leg artery was shot. He's bleeding to death. We had him in the car. The cops came up and pulled him out. They said, 'We want one of these sonsabitches.' We told them the man would die without a tourniquet. We said give us two minutes to take him to strike headquarters for first aid. They tore him away from us and threw him on the floor of a patrol wagon." The next day, under the list of "dead, unidentified," was a "man with leg wound, apparently bled to death."

Forty, fifty bullet-wounded men had been brought into strike headquarters. A driver brought back a message from the Burnside Hospital. "The head nurse asked for twelve men, anybody, to help out." It was a tiny hospital, caught understaffed on a holiday. They needed orderlies to keep the delirious patients on their beds. I was among the twelve volunteers. We arrived at the hospital, found the doors guarded by police. They refused to inform the head nurse of our arrival. "Everything is taken care of, no help is needed," they repeated. One of us, a university research worker, got in with a newspaperman. The nurse gave him three cases to watch. Twice police and plain-clothes men tried to chase him out, though the nurse insisted to them that he was needed. We waited outside. The street filled with police cars. Four men, all bandaged, one limping, were brought out of the hospital by police and pushed into a patrol wagon.

We returned to Sam's Place. There was a call for volunteer blood donors from the South Chicago Hospital. In the car with me was a young man named French, a University of Chicago theology student, who had given blood at other times and knew he was of the universal blood type. We went to the hospital.

I watched the operations. One patient was the man I had seen on the floor. He was Anthony Tagliori, twenty-five, a Republic steel worker; the bullet, entering behind, had cut slantwise through his intestines. The man had a beautiful, powerful physique, a classic, sculptural head. He lived through the operation. "Peritonitis has already set in," the surgeon said; "he has one chance in fifty." He died two days later after a transfusion, the sixth to die. Meanwhile young French gave blood to a worker named Anderson. A bullet had entered his back and gone clear through. At this writing Anderson still lives; he is a huge, wide-shouldered man with a tremendous chest, but his chances are slim.

We went through the hospital. The wounds were in the back, in the shoulder, in the side, in the neck from behind—about 80 per cent shot from behind.

At midnight we were leaving the hospital. A policeman in the doorway was chatting sympathetically with a union man. "I worked at that Republic plant for two years," the cop said. "It's the lousiest, rottenest outfit in the whole United States." At that moment he turned and I happened to see his ammunition belt. About half of the cartridge spaces had been emptied.

Growing Pains of Mexican Labor

BY L. O. PRENDERGAST

Mexico City, May 15

ON THE eve of May 1, international day of labor solidarity, the Federation of Mexican Workers (C. T. M.) was split wide open. Three members of the executive committe walked out of the sessions of its fourth National Council charging that the council was illegally constituted, that bona fide delegates had been refused seats, and that Vicente Lombardo Toledano, general secretary of the C. T. M., was attempting to set up a dictatorship over the federation. After two years of triumphant advance in organization and political power, the united front is seriously threatened, and bitter charges and accusations are being exchanged by the leaders of the C. T. M. and the Communist Party, which is heading the revolt of the dissident organizations.

The C. T. M. represents the first united trade-union front which the Mexican working class has ever been able to form, and in it the Communist Party has been making

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its first large-scale experiment with united- and popular-front tactics. To expect that this joint endeavor, unsupported by any precedent or earlier experience, would meet with complete success was perhaps over-sanguine. The ultimate causes of the rupture are to be found partly in the general backwardness of the country, which is reflected in the organization of the working class, and partly in a clash of ambitions adroitly manipulated by interests ostensibly friendly but actually hostile to the labor movement.

The fascist threat contained in the famous Calles statement of June, 1935, awakened the entire labor movement to the imminent danger of losing all the rights so painfully acquired during the preceding thirty years. Labor's answer was the almost spontaneous formation of a Committee of Proletarian Defense, which functioned as the executive body of the united front until it gave way to the C. T. M. in February, 1936, at a congress called for that purpose. Included in the C. T. M. were such disparate and antagonistic bodies as the Communist Party, the essentially conservative railroad workers, the electricians of the Federal District, who had led a somnolent strikeless existence for twenty years, and the General Confederation of Workers and Peasants (F. R. O. C.) built up by Vicente Lombardo Toledano and his immediate followers after he split the C. R. O. M. of Luis N. Morones in 1933, taking with him a majority of its membership. Scores of other independent unions and local federations, including such powerful groups as the miners and oil workers, also participated. When the fourth National Council convened on April 27 last, it was attended by delegates from some 3,000 organizations with a total membership of well over 600,000, representing at least 90 per cent of Mexico's organized labor.

It would be silly to pretend that this enormous advance had been achieved by the efforts of labor alone. The political situation has been such that the Cárdenas government, facing the undisguised hostility of business, landowners, the church, and the conservative middle class, has desperately needed the support which only a united labor movement could give it. Unstinted government aid was therefore awarded to the C. T. M.'s organizing and educational activities, and Lombardo Toledano was soon generally supposed to wield as much power in the administration as a Cabinet minister.

The friendship for the Communist Party displayed recently by Lombardo has not been enthusiastically shared by the many minor leaders of the various regional federations, who are about as revolutionary-minded as their confreres in the A. F. of L. The willingness of the party to enter the united front and the C. T. M. and to drop its former attacks on Lombardo as an opportunist and "social-fascist" was partly due to its independent realization of the danger of open reactionary dictatorship in Mexico and partly to the new line of the Comintern. But the alliance was at best insecure. One of Lombardo's hardest tasks was to keep his followers, who had built up their own organizations over a period of years without Communist help and often in the face of bitter Communist attack, from kicking over the united-front traces as they saw what they had come to consider their own private reserves being encroached upon.

On the other hand, there is no evading the fact that the Communist Party, suffering from the lack of a theoretical guidance comparable to that in more advanced countries, was frequently guilty of faulty practice. Only recently emerged from the period of romantic—and often heroic—communism, which has been prolonged in most Latin American countries by illegal conditions, an undeveloped proletariat, and virtual isolation from the peasant masses, it was hardly fitted to make the most skilful application of the new line. On the trade-union front the party attempted to assume a leadership for which it was not yet prepared; on the political front the support for progressive democratic governments prescribed by the new tactic degenerated into an uncritical adulation of the President and a scramble for jobs—very Mexican reactions, perhaps, but not very Communist.

Friction originally developed over the party's attempt to utilize its inside track in the Ministries of Communications and Education to organize unions of government employees and school teachers under its own domination and introduce them into the C. T. M. The first serious signs of coming conflict were the complaints of the leaders of various regional federations to the National Committee (on which Communists held two posts) that the Communists were making a hash of C. T. M. discipline by subordinating the interests of the trade-union united front to their own narrower party loyalty. In many instances this was probably true, but it is only one side of the picture. The regional federations, as I have intimated, are not controlled by a lot of little tin saints. The C. T. M. inherited from the C. R. O. M. which it supplanted an unlovely collection of petty leaders who got their training and their appetites in the C. R. O. M. school. Corruption runs through the whole trade-union fabric of Mexico. It is no secret that the Mexico City Chamber of Commerce keeps a list of those regional leaders who can be reached, with their purchase price for settling strikes and for other services. The complaints of such "labor leaders" were thus quite possibly a roundabout way of saying that Communist influence in the unions was beginning to threaten their jobs; what they denounced as breaches of discipline and underhand maneuvers to oust them have been in many cases no more than attempts to expose their thieveries and sell-outs to the rank and file. (This is not to say, however, that the party is itself over-scrupulous about the company it keeps. Several of its fellow-rebels against the C. T. M. leadership who are being very self-righteous about "trade-union ethics and morality" are badly infected with the same disease, which is endemic in Mexico's labor movement and no respecter of ideological quarantines.)

As it became evident that the fourth National Council would witness a showdown, both sides began to gather their forces. The electricians and railroad workers made common cause with the party and the other disgruntled elements it was able to mobilize. At the council sessions the struggle centered around the Communist-controlled teachers' union and the question of seating the Commu-

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nist-controlled delegates, most of whom came from state federations where the fight for supremacy had given rise to alleged irregularities. When a majority of the council voted down the doubtful credentials, three members of the National Committee—the two Communists and the general secretary of the railroad union—followed by the delegates of the electricians, the railroad workers, and nine other groups, withdrew, asserting that the council had been constituted in violation of the C. T. M.'s by-laws and that they would not abide by its decisions. The three committee members, having failed to return within the twenty-four hours given them by the council, have now been suspended. Both sides are claiming the support of a majority of the C. T. M.'s membership to justify the legality of their stand. In this battle of statistics the weight of evidence seems to be for the C. T. M. A careful sifting of the available figures indicates that between 160,000 and 175,000 have lined up behind the insurgents, while at least 350,000 have remained loyal to the National Council. It is clear therefore that the party led a minority into rebellion against the executive committee of the C. T. M.

There has been some effort here to distort the conflict into a supposed dispute over fundamental principles. The impression is being fostered in some circles that Mexican labor has at last awakened to the "Muscovite menace" and has patriotically thrown off the yoke of the Comintern, while in others it is being hotly maintained that reactionary and corrupt trade-union leaders have schemed to isolate the Communists from the workers and to check their influence. Neither version is the true one. The Communist issue was not the cause of the breach. All that was necessary was for some organized minority within the C. T. M., of whatever name, tendency, or political complexion, to make a determined bid for leadership at the expense of the incumbent officials. What is involved is a struggle for power, not a clash of ideologies or the supremacy of one tactical line over another. This is confirmed by the fact that the railroad and electrical unions, perhaps the two most conservative groups within the C. T. M., have been drawn into an alliance with the Communists because their non-Communist leaders wished to challenge Lombardo Toledano's strength.

Unity is more badly needed now than at any time since the C. T. M. was formed. The C. R. O. M., encouraged by the opportune return of Morones from the exile into which he was sent with Calles a year ago, has recently resumed active hostilities in the hope of rebuilding its shattered forces. In the last two months battles between *cromistas* and *cetemistas* have taken a score of workers' lives. Such incidents have a disastrous effect on public opinion, and President Cárdenas has strongly intimated that unless labor leaders can control their followers, the government will be obliged to take measures of its own to prevent violent outbreaks. Nor is this all. A steady drift toward the right has for some time been discernible in government policy. Nothing is being done to check the rising price level, which is making a mockery of the scant wage gains registered by the labor movement since 1934. The excellent analysis of the existing economic situation made by the C. T. M. several weeks ago has been ignored by the public officials to whom it was addressed. The agrarian program is visibly slowing down after its commendable achievements in La Laguna. There is increasing evidence that the administration has been bewitched by the current boom and will allow nothing to interfere with the hollow prosperity which is enriching a fraction of the population at the expense of the masses. A year ago President Cárdenas was hailing strikes as the means of preserving a just "economic equilibrium"; today they are distinctly less popular in official circles. If the oil workers' strike now in the offing comes to a head, it will apparently have to be fought without the backing of a united labor movement. No one stands to gain by the division in the C. T. M. except the employers, who are openly gloating over the nemesis which has overtaken "Tovarich Toledanoff," as the reactionary press fondly refers to Lombardo, and the politicians, who were beginning to fear the growing strength of the organization.

Restoration of unity now depends largely on the attitude of the insurgent minority. I have been informed that the Communists feel they were practically forced into their present position by their discovery of a plot to expel them; they preferred to leave of their own volition and in organized fashion. There is now no way of knowing if any such plot existed. Actually there have been no expulsions, only the suspensions of the three secretaries and of the electricians, who have publicly supported their delegates' action in leaving the council. The dissidents are free to return, according to the National Committee of the C. T. M., if they will recognize the validity of the council and its decisions. This may be a bitter pill to swallow, but unity ought to take precedence over pride. The coup against the Lombardo leadership has plainly failed; it has brought nothing but confusion and dismay into the labor movement. Only the prompt reconstitution of the united front can repair that damage.

Mexico City, June 5

Since the above analysis was written, the nation-wide oil strike has considerably altered the picture. The brief history of the Mexican labor movement records no strike which carries such wide implications as the present movement. Unfortunately, it is impossible here to give a detailed report of the conflict. Its most sardonic aspect has been the attempt of the oil companies to represent themselves as the benefactors of their Mexican employees, whom they call the "spoiled darlings" of the country's industry. Coming from a gang of sanctimonious bandits who in the past have stopped at neither fraud nor theft nor corruption nor wholesale murder nor subsidy of revolt to enable them to grab and hold the oil-bearing regions of Tampico and Vera Cruz, this is an unparalleled piece of impudence.

As official statistics have many times shown, the foreign oil companies, dominated by Standard Oil and Royal Dutch Shell and controlling 95 per cent of Mexican production, are operating here under highly favorable conditions. Taxes are considerably lower than in the United States; productivity is much greater; profits in relation

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to investment are enormous; and wages stand at about one-fourth the American level. Reliable calculations place the net profits annually sent out of Mexico to foreign shareholders at more than 75,000,000 pesos, a figure which does not take into account the profits later realized on crude oil, gasoline, and other petroleum products shipped abroad.

Whether the strike is eventually won or not (and at present it seems reasonably certain that a substantial part, at least, of the demands will be obtained in spite of the companies' frantic efforts to have the government break the strike), it has had a salutary effect on the labor movement. Again the lines are being clearly drawn in Mexico. The whole of the poorer population is openly or tacitly supporting the strike, while the entire bourgeoisie, even including what some Mexican "Marxist" theorists are fond of calling the "non-monopolist, anti-imperialist" bourgeoisie, is just as actively on the side of the companies. Rising above the existing internal conflict, the organized labor movement has taken the lead in the popular struggle against imperialism, and as a result of the strike will have sent out roots into new sectors of the population.

The Communist Party has apparently been awakened by the situation sufficiently to retreat from its recent position. *El Machete,* its official organ, carries a statement from the Central Committee calling for a cessation of hostilities between the C. T. M. and its dissenting faction and offering the services of the party as mediator between them. This statement is actually signed by one of the leaders of the insurgent group in his other capacity of member of the party's Central Committee, who is thus willing to mediate between himself and the C. T. M. It must be said that this is a rather clumsy attempt at peacemaking, though it moves in the right direction. But a frank admission by the party of its error in having provoked the split would bring the day of unity much nearer. There are now signs that all is not well in the camp of the other schismatics; a revolt of the rank and file against the inept leadership of the railroad and electrical unions appears to be brewing. A general shake-up in the labor movement is not unlikely, and unity will probably be restored on the basis of the new alignment that emerges.

Indiana Idyl

BY JOE COLLIER

WHEN the boys go whirling around the Indianapolis motor speedway every Decoration Day, they do it, most of them, for coffee and cakes. Most of them know they can't win. They know, because they are shrewd judges of mechanical performance, that the cars they have managed to draw haven't a chance.

No matter how shiny those cars look, most of them are old. Kelly Petillo won the race in 1935 with a car that was built mostly of parts salvaged from other racers, with an occasional airplane part thrown in. He said afterward that for the last fifty miles of the race he was not certain whether the car would hold together. He won, took the prize money, and bought a new car. But the old car was not retired. It was given a new coat of paint, renamed, and passed on to a driver who was later killed in a dirt-track accident.

The reason for the presence on the track of far more old cars than new ones is that a racing car is specially built and when new costs approximately $11,000. In each year's race cars are entered that have been driven into the wall by drivers who were killed in the accident. One old-time driver this year was telling a reporter that he had driven more death cars than anyone else in the history of the race. As he was about to name them, an official of the American Automobile Association slipped up and spoke to the old-timer. The story was never finished.

The track management says no one ever died on Speedway Corporation property. They all died in the ambulance on the way to the City Hospital. The best estimates are that thirty-five have been killed in the track's twenty-five years. The Speedway Corporation won't say and newspaper morgues are incomplete. When an accident occurs, the National Guardsmen instantly surround the wreckage. They have on some occasions destroyed news cameras and beaten camera men to keep them away from the scene. Three hours later the Speedway Corporation furnishes to all papers its own pictures.

The Speedway Corporation distributes $60,000 in winnings to the thirty-three drivers and thirty-three riding mechanics, and their owners, backers, or employers. Other companies pay lap prizes—which brings the total winnings somewhat above that. To compete for this the car owners must pay $120 as an entrance fee. The drivers must pay $10 each for licenses. It was estimated that last year 160,000 persons paid an average of $3.50 to see the race. Before the race approximately 100,000 saw the qualification trials at 50 cents apiece.

Owners of land abutting on the north straightaway, far from the grandstands, have each year erected bleachers that would give perhaps a hundred persons a view of the race. These seats they have tried to sell for $1 each. Each year the state fire marshal or some other public official has declared the hastily erected bleachers unsafe and they have been torn down before the race. The fire marshal is also supposed to inspect the wooden stands of the Speedway Corporation, which are so near the track that a runaway car might set them on fire. One Indianapolis newspaper has for several years given its staff men detailed printed instructions what to do if a

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flaming car should ignite the stands. The inspectors, according to one report, walk through the stands, and when they kick up a rotten floor plank, order it replaced.

Old drivers say that fatigue or inexperience cause most of the accidents. "I won't drive back of a fellow I think is driving over his head," one of them said. "I drop back or I get ahead. Too much danger of piling into him if he spins or smacks the wall." But the only test taken by a driver completely new to the track and that sort of competition is to be clocked going a certain number of laps at each of several specified speeds, the last over 100 miles an hour. Drivers are required to carry small insurance policies with the American Automobile Association. That is all their dependents get if they are killed.

Two men risk their lives in each car—the driver and the riding mechanic. And the riding mechanic is all but useless in the race. He has two functions, and only two. He watches the right tires for signs of wear, and he massages the hands of the driver when they begin to get numb from the vibration of the car. But the riding mechanics are almost fanatically loyal to their drivers and would fight for them at the drop of the hat. They earn whatever the driver feels like giving them at the end of the race. It has been as low as $10. Two rode this year for nothing except the ride. Riding mechanics are recruited from speed-struck youngsters, or they are old, hard-bitten men who have done little but walk the tracks with engine waste in their hands.

There is a hospital on the grounds. No newspaperman is allowed in it during the race. Beside it there stands constantly, from the first day a car appears at the track weeks in advance of the race, an ambulance from the City Hospital, a tax-supported institution. The ambulance is staffed with City Hospital internes, paid by the city. The city Fire Department maintains apparatus there for weeks on end, paid for by the taxpayers and manned by firemen on the city pay roll. And the speedway is not even within the corporation limits of Indianapolis but in Speedway City. If a citizen of Speedway City asked the Indianapolis Fire Department to come out and extinguish a blaze in his home, he would have to guarantee the cost of the run before it was made.

A few years ago someone set up an X-ray machine at the track and offered, for $25 a print, to X-ray parts that went into the cars. The prints showed up defects in the metal and might prevent some crashes and save lives. But the car owners and drivers had to pay for the prints, and they found they couldn't afford it. That safety measure was soon abandoned.

Officials of the American Automobile Association and of the Speedway Corporation say that the race is a proving ground for new engineering ideas. They claim that balloon tires, the rear-vision mirror, and the straight-eight engine were born of the race. Firestone tires are exclusively used by the racers, filled with nitrogen instead of air. They are made one-fourth as thick as regular tires so that they won't get so hot. The tire men and the drivers have a standing feud. The drivers say that the sole reason for holding speed down is that tires wear out so fast. This year, for instance, the tires on one car wore to shreds in four pre-race laps at something faster than 125 miles an hour. Tire men insist that the product is infinitely better than that of a few years ago, and point out that only seven tire changes were made during the whole 1936 race. A thin gray line appears on the wearing surface of the tire when it begins to get thin, and the driver, when he sees that, goes for the pits.

At about 300 miles drivers get so tired that they can hardly bear it. One old driver said that he raced for 50 miles once crying like a baby. "I couldn't stop," he said, "and I was so tired. I wanted to go to the pits." Someone in the pits, he said, sensed the crisis and marked on a blackboard a huge dollar sign. "That was enough," he said. "It picked me up and I finished."

Almost no one sees the entire race. Some get drunk and wind up in the improvised jail under the stands. Some get drunk and lie on the grass in the sun. Some merely turn their box chairs with their back to the track so they can drink more sociably. The Indianapolis newspapermen and the timing officials are about the only persons besides the drivers who pay attention to the whole long grind. The newspapermen swear after each race that they will not be there for another.

Consumers on the March

BY COLSTON E. WARNE

II

IN THE first section of this article I discussed the various types of organization initiated by consumers themselves or established by social-minded individuals or groups in the interest of consumers. Other efforts to aid consumers have been government-sponsored. With the inception of the New Deal it became evident that a consumer "front" was needed to rally support for the recovery program. Business groups were dominating the Washington scene. Labor groups were seeking to secure recognition, if nothing more. The consumers were absent. The Consumers' Advisory Board was set up to fill the gap. At the beginning the board was headed by a benevolent society woman, Mrs. Mary Harriman Rumsey, who was flanked by a number of economists and sociologists, together with one representative of the consumers' cooperative movement. From the start this board was hamstrung. Its recommendations were not accorded a hearing. Its efforts to establish county consumers' councils were not given the appropriations necessary to place those councils on a firm basis. The councils tended to become the property of energetic clubwomen who often turned to local business men for guidance. In the AAA the Consumers' Counsel got off to a more effective start but was soon rendered less potent by the dismissal of Frederic C. Howe and Gardner Jackson, who had long been consumers' spokesmen.

Out of the wreckage of the NRA, however, some consumers' councils—now called Consumer Institutes—have carried on, have seasoned, and are looking about

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for new activities. Some have gone into the cooperative movement; others are becoming local pressure groups and are seeking to establish quality standards. A small part of the WPA appropriations has been routed into aid for certain of the institutes. Through the TVA, through the Resettlement Administration, and to some extent through the self-help cooperatives set up by the FERA, the cooperative movement has received financial and organizational assistance. The Bureau of Labor Statistics has also made a number of excellent cooperative surveys. Walton H. Hamilton and his able staff, who carried on through the NRA as residuary legatees of the Consumers' Advisory Board, were transferred to the Department of Labor as the Consumers' Division. This division, now headed by Thomas Holland, is marking time waiting for better days. Consumer efforts in the Department of Agriculture have been somewhat more successful. The Bureau of Home Economics has for some time had a consumer slant. The Consumers' Counsel of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration has been rendering good service. Its organ, the *Consumers' Guide* (issued free of charge), is a limited though useful magazine. In the summer of 1936 President Roosevelt, noting the widespread interest in cooperatives, appointed a commission to study European cooperatives. The report of this commission was recently made public.

Consumers have also emerged as pressure groups. We have long been familiar with the laudable work of the Consumers' League in seeking to establish minimum labor standards through "white lists" and legislation. The National League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women, and the American Home Economics Association, all include consumer protection as a regular part of their activities. A Consumers' National Federation was formed in New York City in April, 1937, as a result of a conference attended by members of forty-three organizations.

What is new in the situation is the rise of organizations which picket meat shops in protest against higher meat prices or join with pickets of retail stores in the effort to secure better labor standards. In New York, Detroit, and other cities headline news has been made by the arrest of these consumer-pickets. Judges have not known quite what to do with them. Legislative committees have also been invaded by organized consumer groups. Even the users of telephones now talk of joining rate-protest organizations in certain cities. These protest movements have for the first time since the war become established on something of a mass basis, and workers' organizations are fast developing a consumer consciousness. The Pontiac Local of the United Automobile Workers recently announced that its 3,000 members would start a rent strike on June 1 if rents were not lowered. Their leaders said that rent increases had absorbed wage gains made by the C. I. O. automobile strike.

In expanding so rapidly in these directions the American consumers' movement has involved itself in numerous jurisdictional conflicts. Consumers' organizations have not fitted neatly into functional pigeonholes. They have overlapped. Their ideas have been conflicting. Should a consumers' organization form a buying club or should it open a local store? Ought it to engage in propaganda activities for political change? Should it insist upon the maintenance of labor standards? Should the testing organizations be attached to the cooperatives or separate? Is the government to be trusted as an agency to assist consumers? Varying answers have been given to these questions. The result has been heated conflict. Sponsors of the movement feel a natural reluctance to discuss these conflicts openly, yet they must be faced. Intelligent decisions must be made if the consumer movement is to gain a real foothold. Much of the overlapping and consequent quarreling among consumer groups must be eliminated. Objectives, too, must be clarified. Save for the isolation of Consumers' Research (which has severed itself from other consumers' movements by its anti-labor policies), grounds exist for much greater unity in consumer activity. The movement has suffered too long from dogmatic people who have become so concerned with fostering their own organizations that they have forgotten the role of the movement. It would be utopian to counsel complete unification. It is not, however, too much to hope that, with a field as broad as the United States and with most consumers only just awakening from long slumber, the movement might at least unite on some such program as the following:

(1) The unification of local consumers' clubs, which would serve as the center for protests concerning labor standards and prices, and which would also be educational agencies. The consumers' clubs would pool their local buying and would make real savings by "collective bargaining" with merchants of their town. If they felt the time propitious, they would open stores. (2) The support by the clubs and by individuals of a testing laboratory which would assist consumers, their clubs, and other consumer organizations in the discriminating purchase of commodities. Such a research organization must not only test those commodities immediately available through cooperative sources but touch a broad range of commodities used by individuals who have not yet secured the benefits of cooperative purchasing. Consumers Union will soon be in a position to furnish this service. (3) The use of government publications and such other assistance as may benefit the consumer. (4) The establishment of a national coordinating body of consumer organizations which would serve as a lobby for consumer measures. This body would bring together the cooperatives, the testing organizations, and the pressure groups of consumers to make their common voice felt in Washington.

Under this plan there would be no reason why a local club should not buy its groceries through the district cooperative wholesaler and its general supplies through Cooperative Distributors, and obtain through club rates its technical information on methods of further stretching the dollar from the reports of Consumers Union. It could also be in close association with the Cooperative League, and could discuss government findings in the consumer field. It would, in short, be part of a responsible nation-wide consumer movement.

[*Part I of this article appeared last week.*]

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

An Open Letter to Norman Davis

DEAR MR. DAVIS: You have again returned from a trip to Europe as our itinerant ambassador and have been welcomed with the award of the gold medal of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, which you yourself, when president of the foundation, bestowed upon Elihu Root, Charles A. Lindbergh, and Viscount Cecil. The award is specifically for your services for peace and the betterment of international relationships. This distinction is the more interesting because, as you yourself stated, there has been and is today a serious deterioration in those relationships. You also said in your speech of acceptance that there were some hopeful signs of a realization that "if this is to be a world in which it is possible to breathe and live with any degree of freedom and security, it is necessary for nations to reverse certain suicidal policies which can only bring ultimate ruin upon themselves and upon the world." You dwelt upon the "many prohibitive restrictions on trade," coupled with an unprecedented increase in military armaments "which is reaching a stage of appalling magnitude."

Now that was absolutely true—at least as regards the appalling growth of armaments. Whether there are hopeful signs of an awakening in Europe as to where the nations are heading is not so clear to the lay observer. But what are we to think of your own statesmanship when the press reports, almost on the very day that the honor was bestowed upon you, that your chief recommendation to the Administration on your return to Washington was that we build at once three more gigantic battleships in addition to the two whose keels are soon to be laid? If this is not contributing gravely to the "unprecedented increase in military armaments," what else could? Your purpose, as stated in the press, was to let this be a warning to the other nations that the United States could build the largest navy, and so bring them to their senses about the folly of an international naval race. What a confession of failure and despair this is! In the first place, it is precisely the policy you have been urging upon our country ever since you began attending international conferences for naval-disarmament or naval-limitation treaties. As you yourself once said, you have believed that the United States must have a full pack from which to deal; that the way to get results was to show, when you sat down to the table to bargain, that you had a lot of cards in your hand.

But, dear Mr. Ambassador, what has been the result of this policy of bluff if not the greatest diplomatic disaster possible in this field? Limitation of armaments is at an end. The Washington treaty is ended. England is building a huge additional naval force, and we are saddled with by far the greatest navy in our history—our naval bill this year is to be about $525,000,000. Japan, too, is no longer bound by any restrictions; so that, deny it if you please, we are well along in a naval race against Great Britain and Japan, with Germany, Italy, and Russia tagging after. Is this one of the hopeful signs of a "growing realization" that "it is necessary for nations to reverse certain suicidal policies . . ."? You yourself are advocating that we take another great step toward suicide. Yet you said in accepting the Wilson medal, "You cannot have a peaceful world without economic and military disarmament." The way to disarm, Mr. Ambassador, is to disarm, not to arm!

That you have many precedents for your extraordinary attitude is true. Only a few years ago Stanley Baldwin declared that another rearmament race would drive several nations into bankruptcy and lead directly to war—not peace; and that if war came it would "bring down civilization as we know it." Yet in panic terror of the Italian fleet, and the German and Italian airplanes, he has now committed England to a $7,500,000,000 rearmament plan. All you statesmen are utterly at a loss what to do—except to arm more and more at the very minute when you are truly saying that more armaments mean suicide. Can you deny that this is a confession of complete bankruptcy? You statesmen are fond of declaring that the spineless pacifists would leave their countries defenseless. You arm them—for what? You have said it—bankruptcy and suicide. And you have no other idea how to rescue the world than to lay down more battleships in order to overawe somebody!

Well, fortunately not even the American navy or the Administration has welcomed this advice of yours, if the press is to be believed. The navy wants to wait until it has tested the two $50,000,000 battleships (each costs $50,000,000) before building three more, and the Administration, bent on "economy," isn't anxious to ask $150,000,000 for capital ships to be tied up in some harbor during the next war. It may even be that it has finally occurred to someone in authority that this sort of maneuver is thoroughly understood in other countries, even if the governments have not yet read the words just attributed to you about why you think we should do this. They can read and write in London, Berlin, Paris, Rome, and Tokyo.

Finally, one frank question: Looking back over the record of all the conferences you have attended, do you not think that we Americans would have been just as well off or a little better if we had stayed at home?

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BROUN'S PAGE

The *Daily Worker*

ONCE upon a time it was a custom among New York columnists on off days to turn out a piece kidding the *Daily Worker*. Sometimes these essays would be pretty vicious, while on other occasions the joshing was amiable in its intent. I know because I have written both kinds myself. But in either case the attitude was based on the feeling that the *Worker* was not truly a newspaper even in the broadest sense of the term. Left-wing sympathizers themselves adopted a defensive attitude if you mentioned the *Worker*. They spoke of the difficulties of keeping it alive and said that capitalist critics could not possibly understand the true function of an effective organ of revolutionary propaganda.

There was something in that, but it was also true that a good many members of the staff had a chink in their Marxism. They possessed no portion of the journalistic ability of the *Tribune's* old foreign correspondent.

As a matter of fact, I have my doubts as to whether the *Worker* was an efficient piece of daily propaganda in its early days. Its appeal was pretty strictly limited to the regulars. It sold communism to the Communists. To the average American worker it was almost as bewildering and barren of sustenance as the Boston *Transcript*.

To be sure, from the beginning there were brilliant essayists. Mike Gold, for instance, was and is a superb columnist. But radical newspapers need news just as much or even more than reactionary publications. The *Worker* was strictly a house organ. Today it seems to me an excellent newspaper both in appearance and contents.

Naturally it does not interpret "fair play" as that quality is envisioned by the Chicago *Tribune* or Mr. Hearst's New York *American*. The news is not treated in a spirit of complete neutrality. But whether one disagrees in whole or in part with the ideas which the *Worker* seeks to disseminate, it has a distinct value as a paper of record in its coverage of labor news. Anybody who is interested in this vital field of events ought to read the *Worker* and the New York *Times*—its closest rival in this domain—every morning. Moreover, the two papers serve to some extent to counteract each other and furnish a balanced ration. The business departments of the two publications should get together and offer a joint subscription.

If I express an admiration for the *Worker* which I did not always feel, it may be said that perhaps my judgment is warped by the fact that I am treated much more kindly in its columns than was the case a few years ago. I doubt the validity of that explanation. Even to this day I think that one of its most effective cartoons was a drawing by Jacob Burck which was printed many years ago when I was running for Congress on the Socialist ticket.

I was pictured as a stout infant in a perambulator clutching a bottle plainly labeled "gin." Norman Thomas in a nurse's costume was wheeling me up Park Avenue and proudly saying to a passing dowager, "Isn't he cute? He's only six months old." It is possible, of course, that I have changed my ways and views somewhat since that day, although I have not entirely eschewed the martini, the Tom Collins, or the rickey.

I am somewhat abashed on occasion by pleasant words from the left because they are based on a conception concerning me which I think is fallacious. Only the other day I read a highly laudatory article in which I was praised for having been active in the Newspaper Guild, but the writer went on to say that I had seen the light quite suddenly and that before my conversion I was an indolent playboy who spent all my days and nights acting as court jester at the dinner table in the great houses of the rich and elect.

I wonder what houses he was thinking about? I used to go to Swope's at Manhasset, but it wasn't such a great house and I wasn't so very funny. At any rate I never saw any signposts along the highway which identified it as the road to Damascus.

But here I am talking about myself instead of writing on the subject with which I started. These are old failings which even guild membership cannot cure. Probably this could have been made a good deal shorter if I had said at the very beginning that competence and skill must be combined with good intention to effect a successful performance. This is not presented as a piece of revolutionary advice to radicals. After all, ineptitude seems to be punished more severely in Russia than in any other country.

A few years ago one might have waggled a reproving finger at American radicals and exclaimed, "I don't care whether the author is a good Marxist or not. His novel is terrible just the same. And that isn't a good play or a good dance even though it is intended to be proletarian."

Such criticism would not be particularly pertinent now because men like Odets and Steinbeck, just to mention two names, have proved that propaganda and art are not warring forces. All of which brings me back to the *Daily Worker* and the observation that it is far more effective as a radical organ now that it has become a good paper instead of a poor one. And the man who writes the snappy paragraphs for the sport page is serving just as much as the writer of the editorials. And the same goes for the creator of the comic strip and the health hints. The *Worker* has made itself part of the American tradition, and that isn't going to hurt its objectives either.

HEYWOOD BROUN

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NEW FORMS OF THE DANCE

BY PAUL LOVE

"BUT for us, conscious beings, it is the units that matter, for we do not count extremities of intervals; we feel and live the intervals themselves." Bergson makes this point in his comparison of ancient and modern science, and it might well stand for a definition of the purpose of the modern dance. Ever since Isadora Duncan discovered the Greeks, the art whose medium is movement has attempted to lift itself out of the field of applied art into the field of the fine arts. To do so, a revolution in technique was necessary, and Duncan tried to initiate it through a return to the fundamentals of movement; as she tried to achieve a form by reviving the Greek chorus.

The ballet turned to the dramatic story. The emergence of the dance from extraneous divertissement to an art form in its own right was vaguely felt by dramatic critics during the early presentations of the Diaghilev Ballet. The delicate filigree of the classic "Les Sylphides" gave way to a stronger dramatic form that plunged deeper into human life. But the ballet could not bridge the gap between pure abstract movement and pantomime, and continued to mix the two haphazardly. (This unresolved conflict is the same that afflicted the Jooss Ballet in its recent "Prodigal Son," which was a decided let-down after its excellent "Green Table.")

Then, simultaneously in America and Germany, the gap was bridged by the simple, and likewise profound, realization that movement—not story, not music, not pantomime, but movement—was the substance of the dance. Technically, the previously isolated leg movement and symmetrical arm movement were fused by bringing in the use of the torso. Thus the members became part of a cohesive whole instead of isolated appendages. This final recognition, uncertainly felt by Duncan and Ruth St. Denis, of the body as an integer caused the creation of an entirely new vocabulary of movement. The ballet had been preoccupied with extremities of intervals and had denied the transitional movement between the two chosen points (poses). "But for us," the modern dancer was able to say, "it is the units that matter, for we do not count extremities of intervals; we feel and live the intervals themselves."

This recognition of the unit naturally provided the form for which the dance had been looking. We have had the good fortune to watch the definition, "Movement is the substance of the dance," groped for and finally placed inexorably in words. Under its impetus a new technique capable of expressing the complete man has been found and matured. That technique has searched for and found its principles, fusing the abstract and the pantomimic, and testing itself in short solo flights from which it moved experimentally into short group forms, leaving the "impression," the "mood," and the obnoxious self-expression and reaching out to larger concrete phases of human life. Every major work of the past two seasons has been in group form; all have battered against reaction and convention, and through the excitement and hypnosis of movement tried to comment, condemn, and reply.

Since the method of the modern dance is extremely malleable, partly from the rigidity of the ballet method against which it reacts and partly from the dynamic principle upon which it works, a final definition of new forms would be premature. Nevertheless, experimentation has progressed sufficiently to indicate some trends. Undoubtedly the strongest work to date is that of Doris Humphrey in her trilogy: "Theater Piece," "With My Red Fires," and "New Dance." The ability to build a forty- to fifty-minute dance entirely in sequential movement, without benefit of "story" or literal pantomime, and to retain an audience's unflagging attention over that period is in itself an accomplishment. The span of attention of an audience is relatively small. If Miss Humphrey is able to increase it by as little as ten minutes, she could receive no finer tribute.

"Theater Piece" is in cinematic form, presenting today's vicious competition in business, sports, the theater, and so on, against which Miss Humphrey moves as an isolated figure, forecasting the social unity that will eventually dispel this destructive force (subsequently developed in "New Dance"). I have used the term cinematic rather than dramatic because the latter does not account for the fluidity of dance movement or for the length of time it can cover within a short limit of actual time. "Theater Piece" is composed of "shots" in quick succession, presenting such diverse elements as a woman playing golf, an elementary triangle drama, a business director, a leg-show, a symbolic figure protesting, a race, a stenographer hunting her man. The arrangement of these "shots" and their collision is montage. I use Eisenstein's definition: "Montage is not an idea recounted by pieces following each other, *but an idea that arises in the collision of two pieces independent of one another.*" Obviously, such a method is not hampered by logical time sequence or logical narrative sequence and therefore has a much wider scope and is capable of more profound expression.

"New Dance" is in symphonic form, close to abstract movement, and creates its effect by the succession of different parts similar to the "movements" of a symphony. It opens on an arena lined with spectators, in which the

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leaders state their themes. The purpose of the dance is to break down the wall between the leaders and the group and to build a social unity in which there will be both an underlying group feeling and, to prevent regimentation, an individual expression within that group. The various themes, based on the two main principles of movement, change of weight and breath rhythm, are stated in the Prelude by the two leaders. The woman then extends hers to the group of women in First Theme and Second Theme, and the man his to the men's group in Third Theme. These two partial unifications are completed by a fusion of the two groups in Processional. In Celebration, built on a fugue form and a square dance, the success of this fusion is joyously expressed. At this point too many dances on social themes stop, but Miss Humphrey saw fit to carry hers on to Variations and Conclusion, in which different individuals state their own themes in counterpoint to the *basso sustenuto* of the group. These are the clearest, most concise dances that have been achieved in extended form recently. "With My Red Fires," presented for the first time this season, combines these two forms in a single dance.

Two others deserve attention: Martha Graham's "Chronicle" and Charles Weidman's "Quest," both new this season. Miss Graham has not yet arrived at the theater form which will contain the long themes of which she is capable. After watching the smooth unbroken functioning of "New Dance," it was difficult to adjust oneself to the curtain waits in "Chronicle," especially since they did not seem necessary except for changes of costume and décor which might have been avoided. The dance, on an anti-war theme, opened with a solo by Miss Graham, Specter—1914, followed by a brilliantly executed but emotionally unmoving Masque which concluded the first section, Dances Before Catastrophe. Dances After Catastrophe opened with Steps in the Street, built on hushed, purposeless foot movements going back and forth endlessly. In its restrained understatement it was by far the most moving episode in the whole dance. This section was concluded with Tragic Holiday, which was theatrically effective but overformalized. The third section, Prelude to Action, was a brilliant technical display but created no forthright impact. Throughout there was a coldness of approach which led to the impression that the dance had been scientifically built rather than created from an inner compulsion. The formal design, verging dangerously toward neo-classicism, would have been empty without Miss Graham's own personal warmth suffusing it. At the present stage her compositions too often need her to give them life. Possibly it is this difference that John Martin intended when he called her our greatest dancer and Miss Humphrey our greatest choreographer.

Miss Graham is expert at vividly portraying various states of mind, and all of her best dances have been studies of a person or group at the peak of some emotional seizure. Her form has been the result of an exploration and summation of all aspects of movement pertaining to the particular emotional state with which she may be concerned. The other forms which she has used, such as the pre-classic dance forms—particularly the sarabande, and the pavane upon which Masque was built—seem too stilted for her larger purposes.

Charles Weidman is likewise picking his way through uncertain ground in his "Quest," relating the experiences of the artist in the modern world. Sections of this dance were in his best satiric manner, in which he remains unequaled, but others were excessively prolix. I still feel that he is more at home and gets better results in the purely theatrical field. In creating for the concert stage he is not subject to the restricted time limit and the fast tempo that govern the revue. He is best in the dramatic form he has employed in "Happy Hypocrite," "Bargain Counter," and others. "Quest" was most effective in the opening sections in dance pantomime, wherein the omniscient critics and the old harridans of patrons were pilloried. The last half lost much of its impact through the sudden, unexpected shift to the symbolic.

Besides these dancers, others have turned to the long form—among them Tamiris, Miriam Blecher, Anna Sokolov, Eleanor King, Lillian Shapero, Sylvia Manning, and Gene Martel. With these new avenues opened, the modern dance may be removed from its Sunday-evening cultism and brought into relationship with the arts and the modern world at large.

BOOKS

Roads to Tragedy

THE AGAMEMNON OF AESCHYLUS. Translated by Louis MacNeice. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $1.75.

ION OF EURIPIDES. Translated with Notes by H. D. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.

MR. MACNEICE is of the generation of Auden, Spender, and Lewis, and his translation of the "Agamemnon," as might be expected, is not unaffected by this fact. In the first place, he has benefited by the instruction of the previous generation—Yeats and Pound in their examples, Eliot in his theory that good translation does not hesitate to recreate its object in terms of a contemporary language and experience. The principal difference between Mr. MacNeice and his predecessors is that where they fell into anachronisms he quite deliberately steps into them. We are to take as thoroughly calculated effects the reference to Cassandra as "prisoner clairvoyante," to Orestes as a "tramp," and to the holocaust of dead bodies at the end as an "appetizer" for Clytemnestra's lust. But these particular floutings of the time-spirit are merely expressive of a general indifference to that special language which has grown up around Greek translation and for which there is no correspondence in any known mode of communication of man or beast. The same might be said of the preference for words like "guts" and "whore," of the blunt casualness with which ominous statements are frequently made, and of the toughness, amounting almost to gratuitous cacophony, of the rhythms. All this would be indicative of hardly more than a desire to harass the professors, in the manner of Ezra Pound, if there were

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not also something like a pattern or a drift in Mr. MacNeice's contemporaneity. Of this the clearest hint is given in Clytemnestra's description of her husband and brother-in-law as "those militarists"; and there is also the allusion to a "dictatorship of the state." It must be noted, too, that Mr. MacNeice uniformly translates by "rich" those words which in the Greek may mean fortunate, noble, or simply prosperous. When the last of these words is employed, as in the following passage, it is distinctly in the more limited English sense of economically well-off:

> Prosperity in all men cries
> For more prosperity. Even the owner
> Of the finger-pointed-at palace never shuts
> His door against her, saying "Come no more."

The juxtaposition of the word "owner" (which does not happen to be in the Greek) with "prosperity" tends to restrict the application of the latter to a particular type of welfare. More often, however, the drift is evident not so much in verbal manipulations and additions as in almost imperceptible stressings of tone within a whole passage, as in the Herald's long speech at the beginning. Here the unusually strong conviction of the verse, residing in the syntactical repetition and the sharp concreteness of the key images, makes of the common soldier's account of the Trojan war a piece of modern debunking quite unlike the simple complaint of the original:

> If I were to tell of our labors, our hard lodging,
> The sleeping on crowded decks, the scanty blankets,
> Tossing and groaning, rations that never reached us—
> And the land too gave matter for more disgust,
> For our beds lay under the enemy's walls.
> Continuous drizzle from the sky, dews from the marshes,
> Rotting our clothes, filling our hair with lice.

Unquestionably Mr. MacNeice has pointed his translation around that antithesis which has come to be taken by more and more minds as the modern realignment of the tragic forces: his Agamemnon is a bloated capitalist on the model of Cecil Rhodes or Ivar Kreuger; his Clytemnestra a bored Mayfair hostess with a taste for blood-letting; and his chorus the seething modern proletarian mass. And to say this is really to pay his translation the highest compliment; for if translation is an art and not a self-deluded attempt at an impossible ideal, it must involve the deepest attitudes of the translator, and these are better frankly recognized than left smoldering beneath the surface of the mind. In this view an ancient text becomes hardly more than the raw materials for a creative assertion of values felt in the present; and everything depends on the strength and the clarity with which they are apprehended. Mr. MacNeice is no more faithful to Aeschylus than Fitzgerald or Murray or Professor Weir Smyth; but his translation seems superior to theirs for the very reason that he has not made fidelity his ideal. He has recharged the old play with the specific qualities of a specifically contemporary experience. And since we too are necessarily influenced in our response by our generation we cannot but feel that if this is not the best translation of Aeschylus it is at least the best that has appeared in our time.

What H. D. has done to the fragmentary and little-known drama by Euripides is, of course, quite a different matter. Belonging to a somewhat older generation which regarded the past less as a quarry than as a sanctuary, she has distilled the lyricism of the most lyrical of the Greek tragic poets to the point where it tends to vanish, like the thin line of print on her page, into the blue distance. If Mr. MacNeice's score is prepared for the revolutionary fifes and drums, this is a trans-

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position for the flute. The romantic dream of Hellas is attenuated to its ultimate feminine refinement in a verse whose lightest syllable is made to seem like a violation of the silence. Like the whole romantic picture of the classical world, the effect is essentially static: even the *look* of the page suggests caryatid and Ionic order. What we have here is Greece through a temperament, that is, a style, and the style is both exquisite and charming, to use two of this poet's favorite adjectives. And since any style, even a less beautiful one than this, is a boon in a Greek translation, H. D.'s work is gratifying. But there is in this style too little of that contemporary awareness which makes for the fertile discords in a painting by Chirico or Picasso. It is hardly a proper style for drama, even for such splintered drama as this particular play.

Following the brilliant adaptations of Cocteau, Yeats's renderings of the Oedipus choruses, Messrs. Fitts and Fitzgerald's recent "Alcestis," and Francis Fergusson's "Electra," these translations give strength to the notion that we are witnessing a real revival of interest in Greek tragedy. To seek an explanation is immediately to be led into some perilous generalizations; and there is the fact that every age has its quota of translations. Perhaps the most that can be said is that here is evidence that the tragic sentiment is not only still very much alive but alive with a peculiarly emphatic force. If it has so far expressed itself only indirectly through translations rather than an original body of subject-matter, it may be that this is a necessary discipline and preparation in an epoch when even the essential pattern of tragedy has been pretty widely forgotten. This is the way that tragedy has always been reborn in the past; and this is the most encouraging aspect of the present vogue.

WILLIAM TROY

Judicial Supremacy

THE COURT DISPOSES. By Isidor Feinstein. Covici-Friede. $1.

THE SUPREME COURT AND THE NATIONAL WILL. By Dean Alfange. Doubleday, Doran. $2.50.

THE American doctrine of judicial supremacy, among other results direct and indirect, has led to the making of books without number—many of them scholarly and excellent. Of these two, the first is the more interesting. It is frankly a polemic against the court, but its brief pages are packed with pungent, effective, and even brilliant political argumentation. The author has studied the standard authorities and the leading cases to good effect. (Both these writers, however, have apparently overlooked the important contributions of C. G. Haines.) Mr. Feinstein deftly characterizes cases with an apt sentence or phrase, inveighs against the court as "glorified proof reader" only comparing constitutional text with statute, shows how chance in the sitting of particular judges may profoundly affect constitutional doctrine, as in the minimum-wage cases, explains the revision of view and expansion of meaning of "due process" as the "third American revolution," argues that the court's first hundred years were both the "easiest" and the most liberal, thus properly emphasizing that the extreme of the judicial veto was not an outgrowth of the horse-and-buggy days, and finally places the court in proper perspective as concerns its much-publicized role of defender of individual liberties. In a chapter entitled The Hobgoblins Will Get You, he discusses the bugaboo of fascism, and the court as protector therefrom, and in pointing out the restricted effect of judicial review in supporting per-

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sonal rights, hazards the view that the effort to visualize the recent conservative majority of the court as throwing up judicial barricades in defense of Earl Browder or Norman Thomas "requires a robust imagination." His conclusion is that reform must be sought in different ways, in fact, in all ways possible—as by change of personnel, limitation of the court's jurisdiction, specific amendments conferring national power, and amendment freeing the power to amend.

The other book, recipient of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Award, is also satisfactory, though it covers familiar ground. Perhaps it is ironical that the author's ultimate conclusions are made in reliance upon Brooks Adams's "The Theory of Social Revolutions," published almost a quarter of a century ago. But after all, Adams's critique was, and still is, definitive and final. How modern is the sound of the following:

> After many years of study of, and reflections upon, this intricate subject I have reached the conviction that though Mr. Roosevelt may have erred in the remedy which he has suggested, he is right in the principle which he has advanced, and in my next chapter I propose to give the evidence and explain the reasons which constrain me to believe that American society must continue to degenerate until confusion supervenes if our courts shall remain semi-political chambers.

Actually it is Brooks Adams, writing in the spring of 1913.

The present book is a semi-popular discussion of constitutional history, with analysis of many of the leading decisions, made for the benefit of the layman. The author's final judgment is the now hardly startling one that the Supreme Court is a legislative body which acts politically. In view of the extensive labors of scholars in the field, the book's chief value may well be as an illustration of the process of education of its author, and—notwithstanding recent pronouncements—perhaps also of the distinguished judges of award. We are told that this essay was chosen from among 250 manuscripts by a committee consisting of President Dodds of Princeton, President Moulton of the Brookings Institution, Dr. Canby of the *Saturday Review of Literature,* Dean Pound of Harvard, and Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. One cannot cavil at the respectability of the choice, but in view of the excellent work appearing regularly in the law reviews of the country, one may perhaps wonder whether the professors and students are not overlooking the desirability of competing for such substantial prizes.

Many of the books which needed to be written on judicial supremacy have now been completed. The need of making available for the layman the researches of the scholars would seem to be filled. This is not to say, however, that there are not many parts of the field yet deserving of careful research. There is a possibility of brilliant promise in the tracing of the development of constitutional doctrine in the light of the personalities of the justices, along lines made famous by Parrington in his "Main Currents in American Thought," wherein he touched all too briefly on the making of constitutional doctrine. Such a study would require exhaustive search of biographical materials in family archives and elsewhere. Again, surprising as it seems, no complete objective examination has been made of the actual incidence of judicial supremacy—what it has meant, in specific instances, to the activities of government, how it has affected the course of legislation, or its effect as a potential threat to the representative assemblies—until just this spring Professor Edgerton of Cornell has broken new ground here in the *Cornell Law Quarterly.* Ventures of this kind, however, call for the most exhaustive and painstaking labors. One might suggest that

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Closing in on Hearst

William Randolph Hearst, dean of yellow journalists, is trying to raise $35,500,000 by selling securities on the market. They must first, however, run the gamut of the Securities Exchange Commission. Mr. James Smith describes the convincing statements that have been filed with the commission by consumer, labor, and other groups to the effect that Mr. Hearst's enterprises are not good investments for the American public.

France Lives Dangerously

Democracy in France is threatened by fascist enemies from within and without. Alexander Werth, the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent in Paris, will discuss the alignment of forces in the light of his extraordinary knowledge of men and affairs in France.

Great Britain, Next Phase

In the first of two articles Harold J. Laski discusses the personalities and probable policies of the new British Cabinet headed by Neville Chamberlain. In the second he provides a comprehensive survey of the English labor movement which is now suffering from the effects of a leadership comparable in its backwardness to the A. F. of L. bureaucracy.

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prize funds could well be used to stimulate, and to ease the pain of, such research, rather than to reward the reworking, however well accomplished, of ground already satisfactorily covered by able scholars. CHARLES E. CLARK

A Parthian Glance

THE PRETENDER. By Lion Feuchtwanger. The Viking Press. $2.50.

POETRY, as Aristotle pointed out, is truer than history. The problem for the historical novelist is to make fact as plausible as fiction. Scott solved it by casting actual personages in the bit parts and making his hero an attendant lord or *homme moyen historique*. But it is dangerous to intermingle private destinies and public events; witness that long-suffering family of Noel Coward's whose domestic crises coincided so miraculously with the milestones of empire. The historical novels that remain novels are those in which the background is subdued, in which the echo from the cannons of Borodino is caught as it reverberates through the salons of St. Petersburg. Writing them is less a synthetic than an analytic process. Ordinarily the novelist tries to objectify his emotions in a series of situations. The historical novelist, starting from given situations, trusts to luck or ingenuity to impose significance upon them. He must hew to the outline and let the emotions fall where they may. He is the trick artist who is confronted with a set of random points and asked to produce a picture. The test of his skill is the indirection with which he connects them.

The points which determine the story of "The Pretender" have the advantage of being few and far between. Roman historians make only scattered reference to the false Neros who turned up in Asia Minor after the emperor's mysterious death, one of whom appeared as the figure-head for a Parthian revolt at the end of the principate of Titus. Thus Lion Feuchtwanger is free to develop another of those diplomatic fantasies in which he seems to specialize. He is a past master in all the tortuous ruses of red tape and jobbery, face-saving and back-stairs intrigue. His technique is old-fashioned, the texture of his novel is a little coarse, but the plot is shrewdly hatched. At his best, it has the ironic inconsequence of Stendhal—for example, in the romance of the military commander and the vestal virgin *manquée*. At his worst, it is our old friend Oppenheim dressed up in the *toga praetextata*. Sooner or later his fictitious circumstances are brought face to face with the fact that they never happened in reality and are therefore doomed to failure in the book.

At a time when the standard social and economic history of Rome betrays the bias of an émigré Russian archaeologist, an émigré German novelist is entitled to find certain modern implications in the imperial theme. Feuchtwanger's protagonist, the megalomaniac potter Terentius Maximus, is by design a shadowy and theatrical figure, obviously cut out to be the hollow and irresponsible symbol of leadership. Behind him stands a much riper character, the expatriate Senator Varro, whose impatience with the narrow proconsular administration precipitates the crucial outbreak. One is never quite sure whether the motive is six thousand sesterces or an international ideal, but the issues between East and West, between liberal cosmopolitanism and provincial nationalism, are sharply drawn. Varro's own council table becomes a diagram for fascism; he, the rich landowner, and his friend, the languid aristocrat King Philip of Commagene, gradually discover that they have lost their puppet to the conniving slave, Knops, and the crude soldier of fortune, Trebonius. The futility of his sacrifice is underscored by the compromises he is forced to make with everything against which he took up arms.

The historical novelist is necessarily a partisan of the Cleopatra's-nose theory of history. He has a vested interest in tracing the fates of nations to the vagaries of individuals. Feuchtwanger never manages to convey a sense of anything behind the movements he is describing, an awareness of the popular reasons for disaffection which he might have learned from Tacitus—*rerum novarum cupidine et odio praesentium*. The nature of his material permits him to dispense with catacombs and chariot races and the traditional impedimenta, but he cannot resist the temptation to end on a messianic high note. It is suggested, in faint but unmistakable undertones, that the Book of Revelations may profitably be read as a sequel to "The Pretender." Dr. Feuchtwanger offers a curious contribution to the Johannine problem; his John of Patmos is neither the so-called Presbyter nor the son of Zebedee but a retired actor who is not above making a return appearance in the least authentic of the Senecan tragedies. And, for the sake of the record, it might be well to add that he has reversed the position of the two claimants to the throne of Parthia. Artabanus IV, whom he seems to regard as a legitimate monarch, was only another pretender. HARRY LEVIN

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FILMS

Saltwater Setting

MERELY as a document "Captains Courageous" (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer) is of the first magnitude. It is not a document in the strict sense, being a "made" film. But when the producers declare that "never before, in a picture with a marine background, had such inspired, undaunted effort been called for on the part of producers, directors, and players, nor such expenditure of time and technical resource required," I can believe them. And nobody can doubt that the film was made in an ocean setting which furnished an equivalent of Kipling's scene even if it did not coincide with it. It makes little difference, perhaps, that the Pacific was used as well as the Atlantic—the waters off Los Angeles as well as those off Nova Scotia. The illusion is perfect that we are at the Grand Banks, and no more is necessary.

The illusion we have that we are among Gloucester fishermen for two hours comes partly from the background and partly from the actors. The background is, of course, the sea with its many varieties of surface and its unaccountable motions, and the two sailing ships, Captain Disko's and Captain Cushman's, most often before our eyes. The ships are magnificent, whether becalmed or flying; and the frequent bursts of applause at the sight of their high wild sails are justified. If this is less true farther on when Disko and Cushman are racing home to Gloucester at the peril of their lives, not to speak of others' lives, the reason is that the narrative has at last begun to take effect. If only because we have known the passengers for an hour and a half we can feel concern lest their rival skippers take fatal risks by scudding across too shallow waters or by holding their bows too boldly into the wind. But here is where the actors come in. We are more than acquainted with Disko (Lionel Barrymore), Cushman (Oscar O'Shea), Manuel (Spencer Tracy), and Long Jack (John Carradine); we have accepted them as individual fishermen, and indeed as individual human beings. The flyting of the skippers is the best human thing in the film, unless Spencer Tracy's smile is that. Mr. Tracy as the angelic Portygee who saves the little hero's life and thereafter sings to him on deck by day or night gives one of the best performances in a year of good acting. And John Carradine is again the long, lean near-villain whom he of all men knows best how to impersonate.

For the story itself there is little to say. Kipling's hemannery has never been palatable to me, and it is not so here, where if anything the direction has underlined it more heavily than Kipling did. The contrast between Harvey Cheyne's sybaritic land life and this stalwart life into which he drops from an ocean liner is too baldly stated to carry moral meaning—unless the moral is that we all should take to the Banks, and probably shall when we discover that there is not a single unattractive feature about them. The part of Harvey Cheyne, by the way, had to be made seven years younger in order to accommodate the presence in it of Freddie Bartholomew.

It is no fun to have to record that Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, who have been descending since their first fine song-and-dance picture of not so long ago, have apparently struck bottom in "Shall We Dance?" (RKO-Radio), which is long and dull, and so infatuated with the senseless details of the story it tells as to leave little time for the principals to do what anyone has gone to see them do.

MARK VAN DOREN

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Letters to the Editors

Harvard's Civil War

Dear Sirs: Mr. Lamb's article on the "dismissal" of Messrs. Walsh and Sweezy from Harvard University, in *The Nation* of May 15, seems to me to serve a good cause badly because of its over-simplification of the problem. I am moved to protest because I agree that the "dismissal" was a mistake.

Mr. Lamb speaks of "dismissal." The inference which unwary readers will make is that the two men were forthwith fired. If President Conant, on whom Mr. Lamb wants to put the responsibility, was determined to rid himself of radicals, he was strangely inefficient. He need not have renewed their appointments at all, whereas he reappointed them for two years.

Mr. Lamb speaks of "budgets in the departments of history, government, economics, and sociology" as "frozen," the implication being that these departmental budgets were "frozen" in order to hamstring the social sciences. If Mr. Lamb will consult the official report of the university, he will discover that all departmental budgets are "frozen," that thirteen departments last year incurred deficits which the university had to meet from its general fund, and that as a consequence the general fund was dangerously reduced. The social sciences are not being financially "starved" (his phrase) to any greater degree than other departments.

Mr. Lamb states that President Conant is "not sympathetic with the social sciences." He may not be. I don't know. If the situation were reversed—if, for example, student concentration in the social sciences were about 1 per cent, as is now the case with the classics, and the classics were drawing the greater bulk of the students, I suspect Mr. Lamb would complain. But is President Conant notably unsympathetic with the social point of view? He has "asked a group of our faculty who are interested in the historical development—political, social, and intellectual—of this country to draw up a report on the possibilities of extra-curricular study in this field by undergraduates." "It seems clear," he writes, "that it would be desirable for every college graduate to have a knowledge of the cultural history of the United States in the broadest sense of the term." I find it difficult to reconcile the picture of an administrator notably unsympathetic with the social sciences with the picture of one going out of his way to acquaint college men with the "cultural history of the United States in the broadest sense of the term."

What is valuable in Mr. Lamb's article has to do with the status and future of younger scholars in the teaching profession. This problem, which is not peculiar to Harvard, must be solved, but we shall not solve it by reckless attacks upon university administrators.

HOWARD MUMFORD JONES

Cambridge, Mass., May 14

Dear Sirs: "Literature is not a social science; it is a cure for social science." The speaker, Professor Howard Mumford Jones, was addressing the Modern Language Association at its Richmond meeting last December.

Today Mr. Jones, the friend of the social sciences, rushes to the rescue of Mr. Conant, who is, Mr. Jones assures us, also a friend of social science. The proof? That Mr. Conant proposes to give the students in Harvard College *extra*-curricular instruction in American literature and history. No doubt as "a cure for social science."

Word comes from Cambridge that Mr. Jones is the only member of the committee on extra-curricular instruction in the cultural history of the United States who understood Mr. Conant to propose a program for amplifying the work in the social sciences and thus underlining the presidential sympathies with these social subjects. The members of the committee were drawn from the departments of American history and literature, and not from economics or political science. The emphasis was on the word *cultural,* and not on the words "in the broadest sense of the term," that is, by Mr. Jones's unique definition, pertaining to the social sciences.

It would appear that Mr. Jones is in the arena as the friend of all parties, since he is also in agreement that "the 'dismissal' was a mistake." To be sure, he nowhere advances any grounds for such agreement, a strategic move with which the sideline observer cannot quarrel. Fortunately, it is now possible to record him as lined up solidly with the administration, since Mr. Conant himself, in a statement mailed to the Harvard Board of Overseers on May 26, has for all practical purposes announced his agreement that there may have been a mistake, and that he will accept the services of a committee of nine professors, nominated by 131 junior teaching officers of the university interested in further investigation of the "dismissal."

ROBERT KEEN LAMB

Williamstown, Mass., June 5

Boycott of the *Record*

Dear Sirs: The Philadelphia *Record* has fallen under the ban of the Roman Catholic church in the Philadelphia diocese because of the paper's alleged pro-Loyalist attitude toward the Spanish war. First came letters of protest from the church and then stronger action in the form of a small pamphlet entitled "The Philadelphia *Record* Weeps for Catholic Martyrs." This was distributed at masses on Sunday, May 16, and is still being circulated in the diocese. Charging that the *Record* gives only the side of "the red government of Valencia," the pamphlet suggests that the recipients show it to the advertising managers of the stores where they shop and make a personal complaint at the same time to the proprietors. The parishioner is also urged to see that his neighbor gets one of the pamphlets and to spread them among members of parish societies. The booklet also recommends that *Record* circulation agents should have the door slammed in their faces.

The Catholic protest is issued under the auspices of an organization calling itself the League of American Democracy. Two of the leading lights of the society are the Reverend Joseph S. Hogan, S.J., professor of philosophy at St. Joseph's College and High School; and the Reverend Richard McKeon, dean of the school, which is conducted by the Jesuit fathers. The school is the central distributing point of the pamphlets. Thus far 14,000 of them have been given out. Father Hogan, who is understood to be the author of the pamphlet, has been conducting a one-man crusade against communism here by way of the lecture platform, radio, and correspondence columns of the newspapers. His brother is the president of Fordham University. To date the *Record* has made no reply to the

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protest or to editorials criticizing its stand which are appearing regularly in the Catholic *Standard and Times,* official publication of the church in the Philadelphia diocese.

I thought the present incident might interest you since, to my knowledge, it is the first overt action taken by the Catholic church in this country to strike at a newspaper on the issue of the Spanish war. JOSEPH M. THOMPSON
Upper Darby, Pa., May 28

A Champion for *The Nation*

Dear Sirs: Cyrus H. Eshleman accuses *The Nation* of having become an obedient organ of tyranny and terrorism because you approve of the Wagner Labor Act. In my estimation *The Nation* has always been ahead of the times. Certainly, anyone who doesn't approve of the Wagner Labor Act is way behind the times. It is a pity that the leaders of this magazine can't run the country. If your kind of farsightedness is tyranny, keep it up! J. FRED L. SIMPSON
Savannah, Ga., May 27

A Rebel Turned Loyalist

[*The following letter is reprinted from the April issue of the Spanish weekly* Juventud, *published at Paris.*]

Dear ——: When the rebellion started I was doing my military service at Melilla. For five months I remained there, taking part, because I had to, in the massacre of all those who were suspected of being faithful to the republic.

One night at Majadahonda I was sentry at an advance post. Behind the parapet a corporal and two men were sleeping. At one o'clock I had to send one of them to the officer who was about half a mile away. After sending the messenger I told the other soldier to light a fire while I went to see if the other sentries were still awake. As the others could not see me in the fog, I seized the occasion to escape.

I marched all the next day, weakness and fatigue nearly overcoming me. I had not eaten for two days. In the evening I arrived at Torreledones, where I slept in a stable. The next day I met a friend who told me that he belonged to the U. G. T., and that he came from Majadahonda. When I realized that he was one of us I told him my troubles, and seizing me by the arm he took me to his home and gave me food. While I was eating, his brother communicated my arrival to the sanitary post. A short time later he came back with a lieutenant. We clasped each other warmly by the hand and went together to the Commandancia of Galan, where I was welcomed heartily by the comrades. I felt that I was beginning a new life: there hunger, thirst, cold, misery—here good treatment and freedom.

JOSE FERNANDEZ GRACIA
Valencia, March 24

The "Dictionary of Slang"

Dear Sirs: Mr. Genzmer's review of my "Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English," in your issue of April 24, was both generous and discriminating; and it is in no carping spirit that I accept several of his implied challenges and answer several of his queries.

I may have, indeed I know I have, in a few instances, omitted to mention an American origin; but my delimitations of British Empire usage (for example, "mad money," "stick up") are, I am certain, correct; indeed, I know most of them personally.

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between genuine slang terms and mere idiosyncratic neologisms, yet I think that I have succeeded tolerably well. I have at least excluded these trivial coinages whenever I knew or was fairly sure that they were such. Dr. Genzmer's examples are unhappily chosen: "Athanasian wench" was common in convivial London; "confiscate the macaroon" (considered worthy of notice by Professor Ernest Weekley) had quite a vogue some years ago; "arrested by the bailiff of Marshland" was once so very colloquial that it verged on the proverbial. Your reviewer and your readers may rest assured that nothing was included without close scrutiny. ERIC PARTRIDGE
London, May 21

Doctors for Elk City

Dear Sirs: Our organization, naturally, was extremely interested in Mr. Rorty's article on the Elk City Cooperative Hospital. Having just returned from a short visit there, I should like to take the opportunity to concur in everything that Mr. Rorty says.

Dr. Shadid has demonstrated that the cooperative type of voluntary health association can, in rural areas and under tremendous difficulties, set up a workable, helpful plan. At the present time Dr. Shadid is hamstrung because he cannot get the type and number of doctors he needs. Will those interested in furthering this type of work communicate with me at this bureau, 5 East Fifty-seventh Street, New York. We particularly desire to find doctors who would be interested in going to this or a similar set-up. KINGSLEY ROBERTS,
Medical Director, Bureau of Cooperative Medicine
New York, May 29

CONTRIBUTORS

ERNEST K. LINDLEY, when he was Albany correspondent of the New York *World,* contributed to *The Nation* in 1930 an article on Franklin D. Roosevelt, then Governor, in which he predicted the Governor's election to the Presidency in 1932. As Washington correspondent of the New York *Herald Tribune,* Mr. Lindley has followed Mr. Roosevelt's career as President with interest and sympathy. He is the author of "The Roosevelt Revolution: First Phase" and "Half Way with Roosevelt."

MEYER LEVIN, a Chicago journalist, has been appointed head of the Citizens' Rights Committee to investigate the Memorial Day riots at the Republic Steel plant in Chicago.

ROSE STEIN, author of "M-Day," has kept in close touch with labor developments in the steel industry.

L. O. PRENDERGAST, a journalist now living in Mexico City, has on various occasions interpreted Mexican events for readers of *The Nation.*

JOE COLLIER is a reporter on the staff of the Indianapolis *Times.*

PAUL LOVE has been dance critic of the *World-Telegram* and has written on the dance for various other publications.

WILLIAM TROY is a member of the English faculty of Bennington College.

CHARLES E. CLARK, dean of the Yale Law School, is coauthor of "The Law and Legal Institutions" in "Recent Social Trends" and author of many specialized studies in legal problems.

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